Of Saints and Sinners

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/53813671.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hazbin Hotel (Cartoon)
Relationship:	Alastor/Lucifer Magne | Morningstar
Additional Tags:	Enemies to Friends to Lovers, Canon Universe, Fluff, Humor, Slow Burn, Romance, Enemies to Lovers, Post-Season/Series 01, Getting Together, Mutual Pining, Sexual Tension, Boundaries, Jealousy, Romantic Comedy, Suggestive Themes, Competition, Character Study, Character Development, Demiromantic Alastor (Hazbin Hotel)
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of The OSAS Universe
Collections:	the ever-expanding fanfic library, Hazbin Hotel, sunnie's favs!!, The Printing Press ✍
Stats:	Published: 2024-02-15 Completed: 2025-04-11 Words: 254,407 Chapters: 47/47

Of Saints and Sinners

by morningstar_writes

Summary

After destroying the hotel for the umpteenth time, Alastor makes a promise with Lucifer: in exchange for swapping compliments, learning to coexist, and becoming ~~kind of~~ friends, Lucifer will owe him a favour.

(Falling in love was not supposed to be a part of that deal.)

-- in which they fight heaven, each other, and the urge to be together.

- Translation into Español available: De Santos y Pecadores by Vivivic
- Translation into Русский available: О Святых и Грешниках by sam_morallee

The Promise

Chapter Notes

Some of the BEAUTIFUL fanart:
- comic by @alloplush: 1 + 2
- animations by @Simphony_Da_Kat: 1 + 2 + 3
- animatic by @rizuluv: 1 + 2 + YouTube
- comic by @dnana_art: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4
- drawn by @radioducky: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7
- drawn by @AlfenMeri: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4
- drawn by @dirtgrubber: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5
- drawn by @fullychaotichell: 1 + 2 + 3
- comic by @nemuiemi: 1 + 2
- drawn by @etherael__: 1 + 2

Find all ~300 pieces of fanart here

Spanish translation:
De Santos y Pecadores by Sun_Haworth

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Okay, you." Lucifer stares into the mirror, his eyes gazing worriedly back at him. "This is no big deal. Easy-peasy. Yeah? All you have to do is go down, and talk, and we'll be done."

At the end of it all -

after the war,

the renovations,

and his move into the hotel -

Lucifer is faced with one of the most daunting events in his life: asking Charlie for a father-daughter dinner.

"It'll be good!" He says unconvincingly, adjusting his jacket in an effort to look more put together. "Charlie will say yes. Probably. Maybe. Potentially?"

He paces around his room, still mulling over whether or not he should do it. There's a gap between them, admittedly. It had been a few years, and his socializing skills were a bit… rusty, if he was being honest.

But if he didn't at least *try*, then why did he even bother moving in?

He brushes his hair back with his hand, carefully places his hat on his head, and nods at his reflection.

“You got this.”

Sighing out one last breath to calm his nerves, he finally teleports down into the lobby.

Charlie is surveying the walls of the hotel when Lucifer arrives, her hands gently gliding across the surface to check for damages. She’s alone, thank *god;* the other Hotel staff tended to snatch up her attention, and he’d rather not have an audience judge him when he’s trying to hang out with his daughter.

“Heeeeeeey, Charlie!” Lucifer smiles a bit too widely, and his grin ends up bordering on maniacal instead of charming. “Are you free for dinner tonight? What do you say to a delicious meal with your old man, huh?”

“Oh, dad!” Charlie turns around, her face brightening at the sight of him. Her smile relaxes Lucifer’s nerves, and he grins back at her more genuinely this time. “It’s *so* nice to see you! But, um, I do have plans tonight.”

“Oh.”

Lucifer’s shoulders slump at this.

“Right! Yes, a fun lil lady like you must have lots of things to do. What are you… well… what are you up to tonight?”

Before Charlie can answer, Lucifer sees something extremely unpleasant:

the murky black silhouette of Alastor materializing out of thin air, the glitching tendrils a tell-tale sign of his arrival. Lucifer rolls his eyes as Alastor walks towards them, his bright red shoes clicking on the floor.

Ugh. *Alastor.*

While Lucifer didn’t like most sinners in Hell, there was something decidedly off about him. His smile. His demeanour. His personality his height his ears his attitude his history his eyes his powers all that *red* -

“Oh. It's you.” Lucifer pointedly chooses not to use his name. “Don’t you know it’s rude to intrude on a conversation?”

“Ha-ha-HA!” Alastor laughs mockingly, placing his hands on Charlie’s shoulders in a faux-affectionate manner. Lucifer bristles up like a cat when he sees the physical contact. “Why, you asked what Charlie was up to, and she’s busy going over hotel plans with me tonight. Thus, she can’t make it to your little soirée, your majesty. How unfortunate.”

Alastor did not, in fact, sound sympathetic at all.

Charlie turns around to look at Alastor, her face apologetic. “Oh geez, Alastor, I totally spaced! It’s actually date night, so I won’t be able to make it. Vaggie and I have a whole thing planned.”

“Hmm.” Alastor’s smile twists into a sneer. “I suppose I will make all the big decisions at the hotel, then?”

“Well, that wouldn’t be fair to you, Alastor.” Charlie ignores the thinly veiled threat and places her hand on her chin instead. “Maybe if you could wait… or maybe…”

Her eyes flick thoughtfully between Alastor and Lucifer. There’s a moment of silence amongst the three of them, and the longer Charlie stares, the greater the sense of dread Lucifer starts to feel.

“Well, what do you think of this?” Charlie clasps her hands together excitedly. “Why don’t you two start going over the plans first, and Vaggie and I will join the discussion after?”

Alastor’s grin freezes on his face.

“Well that’s an… idea.” He lets out at last. “Albeit a terrible one.”

“Charlie, I’d do anything for you, but this? He’s kind of, what’s the word,” Lucifer waves towards the general direction of Alastor, “an *ass?”*

Alastor narrows his eyes at him - purposefully steps into Lucifer’s personal space - ends up forcing him back by leaning in uncomfortably close to his face -

“Why, I am absolutely delightful, sir!” Alastor sings. “It is you who is the snooze. If I recall correctly, weren’t you isolated at home for the past few years? I would *hardly* call you a charming conversationalist.”

“Ex-CUSE ME? At least I have manners, not like you, you *fuc-”*

“Ohhhhh-kay!” Charlie hurriedly slides in-between them. “Play nice, you two. Come on, dad! This way, you can make sure everything looks good on my behalf, and Alastor, there’s no delay either!”

“Charlie, well…” He trails off, glancing at Alastor. Their eyes suddenly meet, bright red against gold, and there’s an unreadable expression on Alastor’s face, something that makes Lucifer tear his eyes away first. “I don’t know - ”

“Oh?” Alastor cuts in. “Is his majesty too good to work at the hotel? Charlie here *personally* asked for your assistance.”

“HEY! Whatever Charlie needs, I’m there for her. Unlike *you.”*

“I’ve been by her side since the very start. And what about you, sir?”

That stings on a personal level, and Lucifer knows that *Alastor knows,* based on the pleased smile he shoots down at him. He lets out a guttural growl, but before he can really pummel the shit out of Alastor, Charlie yanks his arm back.

“YOU-ARE-BOTH-WONDERFUL! And I would love to get your opinions on the, um, hotel! So, please?”

Charlie looks down at him pleadingly, her smile wobbly and unsure. At this, Lucifer’s anger extinguishes, and he lets out a long sigh.

“Alright, fine. Just for a few minutes, though.”

“Careful, now.” Alastor jeers, and Lucifer’s eyes snap up to look at him. “If you sound any more excited, people will think that you *want* to spend time with me!”

“Uh, I’d rather be with literally *anyone else!”*

Alastor claps his hands together, distracting Lucifer from his tirade. “Well, let’s begin, shall we? We’ve got quite a bit of work to do.” He walks away without bothering to wait, his long legs taking him halfway down the corridor already.

“Fine!” Lucifer scoffs and turns to his daughter, his arm reaching out to hug her goodbye.

About halfway through, he starts to regret his decision - *fuck, maybe this isn’t a hugging moment?* - aborts the action, and in the end his hand is outstretched between them in the most awkward attempted hug in the history of the universe.

“Er. Bye!” Lucifer laughs nervously, hurrying after Alastor instead of looking at Charlie. He’ll have to try to hug her later.

Or never.

Lucifer would like to say that spending time with Alastor was a treat, but that would be lying.

It’s uncomfortable.

(As.)

(Expected.)

Alastor had actually prepared two stacked piles of paperwork, which Lucifer sorts through as an excuse to do something. While he flicks through the writing, the neat typeface outlining some potential hotel renovations in the future, Lucifer glances over at him from the corner of his eye.

Alastor’s head is tilted downwards as he reads the paper, so all he can see are the fluffy outline of his deer ears and small, curved antlers.

What a whacko, Lucifer thinks, watching as he jots down some notes on the margins. Alastor was still very much an enigma to him, but Charlie seemed to have a great deal of perplexing fondness for him.

“You’re more organized than I thought.” Lucifer says, breaking the silence.

Alastor’s smile doesn’t make it to his eyes, and he drums his clawed fingers against the table.

“How *flattering* that someone of your rank thinks about me.”

“I try not to, actually.” Lucifer shoots back. Alastor leans in closer, his grin stretching maliciously in the process.

“Sounds like ‘try’ is the keyword here.”

“What the - I DON’T think about you! Is that better?!”

“Let’s keep it that way, then!”

Lucifer huffs and pushes his hair back in frustration. “Maybe we shouldn’t talk right now and just finish reading this.”

Alastor mercifully keeps quiet, and Lucifer skims through the rest of the report. For the next few minutes, he marks down some areas for improvement, and he’s fully prepared to sit in terse silence until Charlie comes back.

Alastor is the one who speaks first this time.

“Well. What brings the elusive king to the Hazbin Hotel?”

If he didn’t know any better, he would have thought Alastor was making some form of polite small talk. His face, however, displays his total lack of interest, and Lucifer feels a renewed sense of animosity.

“I’m here to spend time with my daughter, *obviously*.” Lucifer bites back. “Although it looks like I’ll have to spend time with the bellhop first.”

Alastor's eye twitches at the term *bellhop*, but his smile remains firmly intact.

"Why, I'm honoured that you would deign to grace us with your presence!" Alastor shoots up from his seat and starts walking towards Lucifer, his gait slow and purposeful. "When exactly did they banish you from Heaven, again?"

Lucifer jumps up as well, scowling at Alastor the whole time.

"How *dare* you! Who was it that cleaned your mess after you lost to Adam?"

Alastor actually snarls at this, and his shadow leaps out for a split second. The momentary flare up catches Lucifer off-guard, but Alastor is quick to calm his face back into a neutral smile.

"Oh, I do dare, your majesty."

Alastor leans in close, closer, enough that Lucifer has to take a step back -

"You have no *real* jurisdiction in Hell, and we all know it. So why don't you go running back into your lair like the coward you are?"

"Run? Funny you should say that - where were you when we were rebuilding the hotel, huh? You were nowhere to be seen!"

"I started this hotel without you," Alastor crushes Lucifer's hat under his hand, "and I'll run my hotel without you, too!"

"YOUR hotel? This is CHARLIE'S!" Lucifer is so enraged that his hands are set ablaze, his pyrokinesis activated subconsciously. The fire spreads to the paperwork, lighting it into a red-hot pile of flames, and he drops them on the ground from surprise.

"Oh, crap!"

Lucifer watches in horror as the fire spreads, incinerating everything in its wake. Meanwhile, Alastor cackles so loudly he has to grip onto his radio cane to steady himself, not making a move to help out at all.

"Where the hell are your fire extinguishers?" Lucifer snaps.

"Now, now. Why would we have any?"

"Uh, for these kinds of situations, dumbass!"

"Well, none of this would happen if you weren't here. *Sir*."

"Oh, you *really* think you'll never have a guest who can shoot fire? We're in Hell, you fuck!"

Lucifer grabs on to Alastor's radio cane -

Alastor yanks on Lucifer's apple cane -

The fire catches on to the curtains -

“Come ON! Charlie is not going to be happy about this!”

“I shall leave it up to you then, since you *love* cleaning up messes so much!” Alastor’s grin widens. His eyes reflect the burning fire around them, the flames flickering wickedly.

“Dad! ALASTOR!”

They both freeze, and there’s a pause in the scuffle as they turn around, taking in the bright red flames that had spread throughout the entire room. Charlie and Vaggie are standing in the doorway, looking horrified as the crystal chandelier snaps and lands with a resounding

CRACK!

against the floor.

“What the HELL, you two?!” Vaggie instinctively shields Charlie from the flames. “HOW did this happen?”

Lucifer’s brain short-circuits, and the only thing he manages to say is:

“Uh, we were just so *fired up* about checking the hotel paperwork?”

In the background, Alastor lets out a muffled snort.

Okay, well.

That wasn’t great.

Lucifer sighs and runs his hands through his hair, thinking about what everything that went wrong. It was fine up until Alastor - *Alastor!*

He grits his teeth and shoves him out of his mind. *How flattering that someone of your rank thinks about me,* he had said.

Any time spent thinking about him was time wasted, anyway.

“Whatever.” Lucifer mutters. “Let’s focus on more important things.”

He pushes his bedroom door open and makes his way down to the burnt conference room. A few days have passed, but the room was still in shambles. Lucifer had avoided the area purely

out of guilt; the other residents made sure not to mention it around him, but he knew that everyone was annoyed at its singed state.

I can build things! I'll patch up the room, and then Charlie will forgive me, and everyone can move on, Lucifer thinks. Nodding to himself, he pokes his head into the damaged remains of the room -

Only to see the familiar figure of an ~~annoying~~

~~rude~~

~~awful~~

tall, red-haired demon.

"How lovely to see you again." Alastor gives a deep, proper bow to welcome him in. It irked Lucifer every time Alastor pretended to care about his status as the King of Hell. It was even more irritating that Alastor just wanted to get under his skin.

And the WORST part was that it worked.

"What the *hell* are you doing here?" Lucifer huffs. "Are you following me, or something?"

Alastor pauses at this, and he places his hand on his chest innocently.

"Why, I was here first." Alastor almost looks sincere, but it's ruined by the self-satisfied grin he has on his face. "It's clear to anyone that *you* are the one who is following me around."

"Just - AGH! I don't have time for this!" Lucifer runs his hands through his hair from frustration. "Get out of the way. I'm going to fix this room."

"No need!" Alastor says brightly, snapping his fingers. His little shadow demons conjure up out of nowhere, and they start running to pick up the burnt debris. "I have it under control."

God. Alastor was clearly being unhelpful on purpose, and it was starting to get on his nerves.

"Look, I'm here already. I caused the fire, so it's my responsibility to return this place back to normal."

"No, no, no." Alastor tuts and stands right in front of Lucifer, effectively blocking him from coming in. "You're a *guest* here! And as I am *staff,* I have to take care of the problems that you guests do in the rooms."

"Uh, I live here now too!" Lucifer pushes his giant hotel key right against Alastor's chest, forcing him to step backwards. "So get the hell out and let me fix this!"

"Two letters," Alastor says condescendingly,

"N," he leans down,

“O,” his voice lowers,

“And what does that spell?”

“FUCK you!” Lucifer spits out.

“WRONG! It spells out ‘no,’ your majesty.”

Lucifer launches red-hot blasts at Alastor, who deftly whacks his giant key to the side with his radio cane. He lunges angrily to grab Alastor’s jacket - twists it underneath his fists - and he doesn’t notice the fireballs ricocheting off the room, knocking into the broken chandelier and setting everything ablaze.

It’s only after Alastor shoves him back, *hard,* when he realizes that the flames are eating up the remnants of the destroyed conference room.

“Not again!” Lucifer cries out, watching in alarm as the room catches on fire. “We need the fire extinguishers!”

“Oh? I already mentioned that we don’t have any!"

“STILL? Shouldn’t you add it to your hotel plans or whatever?!”

“Unfortunately, *someone* burnt those all up.”

The fire creeps into the hallway, and Lucifer rips off his jacket in a panic, trying to snuff out the flames. Alastor yawns and steps outside, only to be met with an increasingly upset Charlie, her horns peeking out of her hair.

“DAD, ALASTOR! OUTSIDE, NOW!”

“I’m not angry, just disappointed.” Charlie prefaces.

“Charlie, everyone knows that’s worse!” Lucifer’s hands are covering his face, so it actually comes out in a muffled *“Chrli, emm knomm thamm wmmm.”*

“Look,” Charlie's smile is a bit strained, “the whole purpose of this hotel is to provide a home for sinners! If you two keep *breaking* it, there won’t be a home at all. Alastor - as my facility manager, and dad, as my family member, I know you two wouldn’t want to cause further harm.”

“And you two idiots are literally ruining everyone’s hard work.” Vaggie deadpans, gesturing towards the burning remnants of what used to be the conference room. She had managed to fly out and find a long enough hose to extinguish the flames, but the room was unusable (again) for the time being.

Lucifer sneaks a glance at Alastor, whose expression is unreadable. He had no idea what was on his mind - was he angry? Annoyed? Sad? The only thing that broke his calm facade was the slightest spasm in his eye.

“Well,” Alastor begins, examining his hands in apathy, “I suppose you’re not wrong. I do have a vested interest in this fine establishment.”

“Yes, you’re right, Charlie, and, um. Maggie?” Lucifer hurries in, not wanting Alastor to have the last word. “I’m sorry about this - it’s just… maybe Alastor and I should be. Y’know. Separate. I’m perfectly happy to spend the rest of my time on the right side of the hotel.”

“I agree with the short king. However, I have already staked my claim to the right side.” Alastor says nonchalantly.

“What? You can’t - my room is on the right side!”

“Oh, such an unfortunate circumstance for you! That’s still my side - why don’t you vacate the premises?”

“Why you little -“ Lucifer charges forward to seize Alastor’s shirt lapels, and he hisses back, shoving his radio cane against his chest.

“Okay STOP! STOP!” Charlie squeezes in between them, trying to prevent them from attacking each other. “THIS is what I’m talking about! No one is going to want to stay here if you’re acting like this - and while I do want both of you to be here, I don’t want this to affect the others. Got it?”

It’s rare for Charlie to express her thoughts so sternly, and so Lucifer slumps against the couch sheepishly, keeping his mouth shut. Alastor wipes his hand on his shirt, but also remains quiet for the time being.

“Okay, obviously you two don’t get along.” Charlie says, gesturing from Alastor to Lucifer. “But! You two also don’t know each other at all. So maaaaybe, if you hang out, you’ll find that you have a lot in common, and this, um, *difficult* relationship that you two have could be remedied!”

“Oh, Charlie. I'm not sure I like where this is going.” Although Alastor’s face is still perfectly composed, his hands are in a white-knuckle grip on his radio cane.

“Unfortunately, I have to agree with him.” Lucifer adds.

“See! This is working already!” Charlie's eyes sparkle with excitement. “Okay, listen to my suggestion - neither of you participated in our trust exercises from a few months ago! Why don’t you two spend a little bit of time each day to get to know each other, do something

nice, and maybe that way you can, y'know… liiiiike each other? Become friends? Or at least tolerate being in the same room together-"

"No." Alastor cuts in. "I would rather perish. Again."

"Oh god. Babe." Vaggie says uncertainly, placing a hand on Charlie's shoulder. "You know I love your positivity, but I'm not sure how well it'll work with these two."

Charlie bites her lip and looks at Lucifer. "Dad, please?"

No matter how old Charlie gets, Lucifer can still remember when she was just a baby, listening to him sing lullabies and playing with his rubber duck creations. Her smiling face resembled the sun - but her saddened expression makes his heart wrench.

And he already knew it was a losing battle from the start.

"Okay. Okay!" Lucifer says exasperatedly. At this, Charlie lets out a whoop.

"Yes, dad! This is great!" Charlie swivels over to look at Alastor, who, up until this point, had been suspiciously silent. "Alastor, what do you say? Just a little nice thing everyday?"

"Hmm." Alastor taps his finger against his chin thoughtfully. "Well, why not?"

"Yes! Thank you, Al - "

"As long as we make it a *deal."*

Lucifer scoffs at this, rolling his eyes, and he feels Alastor slowly turn around to look at him.

"Uh, never in a million years, douchebag." Lucifer spits out. Alastor's suggestion also makes Charlie shake her head, her eyes wide with dread.

"Alastor, come on! There's no way you can take my dad's soul. That's just not going to work."

"Not for his soul, Char-lie!" Alastor sings. He brings himself up to his full height, and he's practically a whole head taller than Lucifer, even more so. Alastor's red eyes glow unnaturally in the light, and Lucifer immediately regrets locking eyes with him. There's something heavy about his stare, as though Alastor was sizing him up, gauging the best way to rip him apart.

"It might be more appropriate to call it a favour. In exchange for us embarking on this - shall we say, charade? - he will do one thing for me, no questions asked." Alastor leans away, but his eyes never leave Lucifer's face. "How does that sound?"

It's a challenge.

Not a request.

And Lucifer was damned if he was going to let someone push him around like this.

“You want a favour from ME? I know what that means.” Lucifer scowls, crossing his arms determinedly. “You’re not the first jackass around here who’s tried to use me.”

Alastor looks unfazed by his reaction. In fact, he smiles wider, his teeth glinting sharply under the light.

“Well, if you’re that worried, why don’t I edit with an addendum? No *killing,* no *maiming,* no questions asked.”

“WOW!” Lucifer barks out a sarcastic laugh. “It sounds like you’ve been thinking about this for a while.”

“Have I!” Alastor returns his laugh with gusto. “Why, sir, you think much too highly of me. Alas, I am merely a simple hotelier, who just wants this hotel to thrive! Right, Charlie?”

He pinches Charlie’s cheek, and Vaggie squawks in displeasure.

“Get your hands off of her, Alastor!” Vaggie shouts, pulling Charlie close to her side. “And we’re onto you. Lucifer, you should be careful. Favour or not, Alastor’s always up to something.”

“No, no. Of course not.” Alastor shakes his head. “I would never do anything to harm any of us here! And of course, that extends to the royal king himself.”

His smile is a bit sinister.

(But that’s normal for Alastor).

Lucifer lets out a sigh and thinks about his options. Truthfully, the only thing he really drew the line at was hurting his family, so Alastor’s little ‘favour’ was of absolutely no consequence to him.

“Thank you, Maggie. I appreciate your concern. I’ll think about it.”

“Actually, uh, my name is-”

“How lovely.” Alastor claps his hands together. “Why don't you take an hour to decide? I will return when the clock strikes midnight.”

And with that, Alastor fades away into the darkness.

“Dad, please don’t feel pressured to take this.” Charlie bites her lip worriedly. “I’m sorry that it escalated so much. Alastor’s kind of… strange, but he’s been sticking his neck out for the hotel. I thought he’d be a little more receptive than this, but I guess that’s just my wishful thinking again.”

She looks crestfallen, and Lucifer smiles reassuringly at her. One of Charlie’s best qualities was her empathy, and he didn’t want her to feel badly about how everything unfurled.

“No, Charlie.” Lucifer pats her gently on her shoulder. “I mean, I’m definitely part of this problem. He’s a jerk, but I should know better than to rise up to his taunts, you know?”

“He does seem to enjoy challenging you, dad.” Charlie admits. An idea strikes through Lucifer’s head, and he starts cackling at the prospect of it.

“Oh man! You know what? This could be a fun way to teach that jerk a lesson. I’m going to add a request that he is going to HATE!” Lucifer grins, and Charlie laughs nervously at this.

“Dad, the whole point is for you two to be nice to each other. You’re not going to try and stir up something, are you?”

“Oh, don’t worry, Char-Char.” Lucifer rubs his hands together nefariously. “This definitely falls under the *nice* category.”

At exactly midnight, Alastor reappears into the lobby. Lucifer is the only one present - Charlie and Vaggie had gone off to sleep - and for a moment, they stand in front of each other silently.

Alastor is tall.

Really, *really* tall.

Lucifer pulls himself up to his full height, and he seriously considers stretching out his wings so that he could fly up to Alastor’s eye level. He’s never been one to worry too much about his own stature, but he’s not enjoying the way Alastor (literally) looks down on him.

Lucifer adjusts his hat so that he hopefully looks a bit more intimidating in nature.

“So, what do you say?” Alastor says, twirling his radio cane in idle anticipation. “These terms are quite fair, if I do say so myself.”

“Just one more thing.” Lucifer lifts up a finger for emphasis.

“How intriguing. What is it?”

Oh-ho, YES! I got you! Lucifer thinks triumphantly. He flashes a smile up at Alastor, who tilts his head to the side from confusion.

“You have to compliment me.”

Alastor blinks at this.

“Every. Day.” Lucifer continues. “And it has to be genuine.”

The silence stretches,

on and on

and on…

Lucifer had never seen him rendered speechless before.

“I.” Alastor swallows, his eyes darting from left to right. “What?” The radio filter slips away for one second, and Lucifer hears his real voice, low and confused.

His voice is nicer than he expected. Smooth, and almost. Baritone.

Lucifer brushes aside this realization to continue talking about his Terms and Conditions™.

“You have to say something nice about me. From the heart! Not a bad exchange for a favour from the King of Hell himself, huh?” Lucifer smiles lopsidedly, certain that Alastor would back down, or at least argue vehemently.

When Lucifer thinks that he’s finally called Alastor’s bluff, his face slowly composes itself, morphing back into his signature smile.

“I can do that.” Alastor says cheerily. “As long as you also compliment *me.”*

This… was not what he anticipated.

“Uh, what?”

“This little game that we are participating in…” Alastor purposefully steps into Lucifer’s personal space, “requires two players. And so, the rules should apply to us both. Don’t you agree?”

Don’t agree with him, Lucifer thinks desperately, *don’t agree don’t agree don’t agree* -

“Unless, you’re too cowardly to partake, sir?” Alastor goads.

“FINE!”

Lucifer hates himself a lot sometimes.

“Sounds like a deaaaaaaal.” Alastor croons, extending his hand out. “Shall we shake on it?”

“It’s a favour, asshole. Not a deal. And no shaking.” Lucifer resolutely crosses his arms, and Alastor looks a bit put out by this.

“Not a problem! What about a pinky promise?” Alastor suggests, extending out one sharp finger.

“A what?”

“A pin-ky-pro-mise.” Alastor enunciates the words condescendingly. “You stick out your little finger,” he waggles both of his pinky fingers in front of Lucifer’s face, “loop it together,” he demonstrates with his own, linking them, “and shake, like so.” He brings his hands up and down in a very dramatic manner. “Was that slow enough for you, or would you like me to go again?”

“No, I got it the first time.” Lucifer says flatly. “I don’t want to engage in any sort of hand holding behaviours with you, alright?”

“It is not official if we don’t.” Alastor makes a move to start teleporting away, his body shifting into shadow. “I am getting a little tired of this conversation. Can you make up your mind?"

“UGH!" Lucifer growls, annoyed at how the situation was turning out. "Okay. I pinky promise that after *all this,* I'll owe you a favour.”

“How excellent.” Alastor smiles harder, if that was even possible. Lucifer sticks his pinky finger out, and he realizes with a shock that Alastor’s hands were much bigger, almost twice the size of his own.

When they link their fingers together, they’re both enveloped in a powerful green glow, the wind almost knocking Lucifer’s hat off his head. Alastor’s skin is warm to the touch and surprisingly soft, a complete contrast to the claw-like shape of his hands.

As his little finger curls around his, Lucifer can’t help but examine Alastor’s bright red fingers, long and slender in appearance.

“What are you looking at?” Alastor asks, bemused. Lucifer realizes that it’s much too unpleasant to admit that he was - what, looking at *his hands?* - and he clears his throat awkwardly.

“AHEM! Just, uh, it’s so green here, isn’t it?” He says unconvincingly. Alastor looks at him strangely, and doesn’t bother to respond.

After the green light slowly dims down, Alastor makes a show of wiping his hand down the front of his jacket. “I suppose you should retire to your bedchambers now, your majesty. We can embark on this pretense tomorrow.”

“Technically, today would be our first day.” Lucifer says smugly, watching as Alastor’s deer ears twitch irately on his head. “So, what’s your compliment for today, hmm?”

“Eager, aren’t we.”

Despite his complaints, Alastor carefully studies Lucifer’s figure, his eyes slowly raking over him in his entirety. It’s a bit uncomfortable, but Lucifer stands his ground determinedly.

After a minute, Alastor opens his mouth. “Well, your boots are nice, I suppose.”

“Oh.” The corners of Lucifer’s lips quirk up a bit. “Well, thank y-”

“They make you look like you’re at least 5 feet tall!”

Lucifer gapes at him. “I’M TALLER THAN THAT, YOU ASS!” He lunges at him, and Alastor cackles widely as he dodges.

“And THAT is straight from my heart!” He taps Lucifer’s nose patronizingly with his pointer finger, and before he can even react, Alastor quickly teleports away.

“I’LL GET BACK AT YOU FOR THIS!” He shouts.

At nothing.

And if he disliked Alastor before, he definitely hated him now.

Alastor ensconces himself into his room, and he looks down at his hand, reflecting on the pinky promise they just made.

What a fool, Alastor thinks, his smile stretching all the way to his ears. Lucifer clearly had no idea what he had just agreed to, and once their little deal was finished, he was going to…

Hmm.

Alastor wasn’t sure what to ask for, yet.

“Regardless, it’ll be so very entertaining to have the King of Hell on my leash.” His eyes glow menacingly in the dark, mutating and ticking away into radio dials,

tick,

tick,

tick,

tick.

“I’m going to make him do something that he despises.” Alastor cackles, his shadow elongating ominously. “And he’ll regret that he *ever* had the displeasure of meeting me.”

Chapter End Notes

Fun Facts:
- Apparently Alastor likes dad jokes (puns and stuff? according to the wiki)
- I kept Lucifer’s height ambiguous because there were conflicting reports about it!
- You can start guessing what the favour is based off of Alastor's comment at the end!

CH. 1 FANART:
- drawn by @starkspi
- drawn by: @ann168
- drawn by @twosoulss77
- drawn by @grijannax + @Grigorra98

Here are all my social media platforms

The Secret

Chapter Notes

CH. 2 FANART:
- comic by @dnana_art: 1 + 2
- drawn by @nerdynuala
- comic by: @astridev.bsky.social

Thank you!! Find me on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites + Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

List of things that Lucifer hates:

1. a Mysterious Person™ watching him while he's asleep
2. and they're hovering over him
3. ominously

"AGH!"

Lucifer throws his feather pillow - smacks someone on the head - and hears it flop pathetically onto the ground. As he blinks his sleep away, various shades of red, red, and more red dot his vision.

He only knew one person who matched that colour palette.

"What do *you* want?"

"Rise and shine, sir." Alastor sits down on the edge of his bed, and Lucifer shuffles away from him.

"Don't you know how to knock?" He complains, wrapping his blanket around his head. "What time is it?"

"It's 5 am!"

"It's too early to deal with you. Leave."

"I always start my day at the hotel at this hour. Early bird gets the worm, as they say." Alastor glances at the pile of rubber ducks in the corner, and chuckles mockingly. "Or, perhaps in your case, early *duck* might be better for you?"

"Ha. Ha. You're funny. You should be a comedian." Lucifer deadpans. Alastor sticks his radio cane underneath the bed covers and lifts it off of his head. His blond hair is sticking up

everywhere, and he casts a glare at Alastor, who looks perfectly put together.

He knows the *real* reason why Alastor came by so early.

“You’re not going to intimidate me like this.” Lucifer growls.

“Like what?”

“You’re trying to ambush me in the morning and catch me off-guard!” Lucifer waves an impatient hand over at Alastor’s outfit. He’s properly dressed in his usual clothing, not a hair out of place, and Lucifer is still in a sleep muddled state. He’s even wearing his worn-out apple patterned pyjamas, which has a hole in one of the sleeves.

“I reject your accusation.” Alastor laughs it off, but there’s a dangerous gleam in his eyes. “In fact, I am just here to suggest an activity for today.”

“Uh oh.”

“No need for theatrics! Why, it’s just a friendly sparring match. I heard that those other hotel residents went straight into battle, and the fighting and bloodshed were essential to the foundations of their friendship. That should help us bond immensely, wouldn't you say?”

“I highly doubt that’s what Charlie had in mind when she wanted us to ‘be nice to each other’.” Lucifer mimes air quotes with his hands, and Alastor's deer ears flatten atop of his head.

“Hmm. Worried that you’ll lose?” Alastor taunts. Lucifer finally sits up and crosses his legs, glowering at him the whole time.

“Uh, *hardly.* Suggest something else.”

Alastor’s grin resembles an animal baring its teeth. “There is absolutely nothing else I would like to do with you.”

“Ditto, asshole! You think I want to spend any time with you?!”

“Well, since you keep showing up where I work and live, it feels like you do.”

“YOU’RE the one who came into my room! I don’t remember inviting you in!”

“And *I* moved in months ago. When did you join us again? Oh, right… *last week?”*

At this, Lucifer snarls and throws his blankets off. “Fine, let’s go out there and fight, BITCH!”

“Oh? That is certainly music to my ears!” Alastor’s shadow engulfs the room in a viridescent green,

growing,

growing,

GROWING,

until it breaks Lucifer's door right in half.

"What was that sound?!" Vaggie's voice trails in from outside the room, and she gasps when her eyes land on the destroyed door.

"CHARLIE!" Vaggie yells. "THEY'RE AT IT AGAIN!"

Lucifer feels like he's on time-out when he's faced with everyone's judgmental gazes. He's reclining against the back of the sofa while trying to ignore Alastor, who is currently standing behind him.

"He started it." Lucifer says sulkily. Alastor leans his head down uncomfortably close to Lucifer's face.

"And I'd be happy to finish it!"

Lucifer swats at him, and Alastor dodges his hand in one fluid motion.

"It's fine!" Charlie smiles unconvincingly. "I've actually just gathered everyone here to help brainstorm what you two can do next. I mean, a little team work makes the dream work, right?"

"Charlie, what kind of ideas are you lookin' for, anyway?" Angel Dust asks. He's sitting on the couch with Husk, who is currently lighting up a cigarette in his paws.

"My dad and Alastor have agreed to spend time together." Charlie gestures over at them. "And, I would looooove if everyone could suggest something for them to do that doesn't involve potentially, um, killing each other!"

"Wait wait wait wait *wait.* You want *him,"* Angel Dust points at Alastor, "and *him,"* his finger moves to Lucifer, "to- what, become best friends?"

“Well, any sort of relationship would be great!” Charlie says enthusiastically. “Acquaintances, or uh… well, whatever’s realistic. Just something where they can hang out in the same room together without any problems.”

“Here’s an idea: why don’t we allllllll go out for a night on the town?” Angel Dust cackles, not taking it seriously at all. “They can drink and dance the night away! Alcohol *is* the fastest way to become friends. My girl Cherri can even get us the VIP booth!”

“That is never going to happen.” Alastor’s smile looks more and more strained by the second.

“Well, what do ya wanna do, Alastor?” Angel Dust asks.

“I would like to leave.”

“THERE-IS-NO-POINT-IN-ASKING-HIM!” Charlie blurts out, and she sags back down onto the couch, looking deflated. Vaggie squeezes her shoulder reassuringly, and Charlie places her hand atop of hers. “Sorry Angel - it’s just, they’ve been stressing me out. That’s all.”

Lucifer feels a twinge of guilt at this. He turns around to look at Alastor, who is steadfastly looking away from him.

“My dear Charlie, you worry too much. We are on the path to an amicable coexistence. Right, sir?”

To demonstrate his point, Alastor gracefully settles down beside him.

There’s a comically large distance of The Couch© between them, and Alastor places a pillow down as a barrier, but still.

“Well…” Lucifer smiles sheepishly at the others. “We’re open to any ideas.”

Alastor looks miffed at this. “I see you don’t have my back. I’m wounded!”

“You’re wounded? You’re the one who attacked me this morning!”

“And *you* reciprocated, didn’t you?”

“Enough, jack-offs!” Angel Dust spreads his six arms out widely, almost smacking Husk’s face in the process. “Jeez, we can really cut all this tension with a knife.”

“You’re gonna want to cool it.” Husk murmurs to Angel Dust, eyeing Alastor’s increasingly angry smile. “The boss looks like he’s gonna fuckin’ blow a fuse soon.”

“Okay, okay! I’ll just offer up this one piece of golden advice: all you gotta do is find out what the other person likes, and give it to them! That’s how I got to be so good with my body,” Angel Dust wiggles his eyebrows, “and my mouth.”

“Huh?” Lucifer blinks at this, confused. “What does that mean?”

“Aw, you’re cute, king.” Angel Dust coos. “Which makes me think you’ve been single for too long.”

“Hey!” Lucifer protests. Angel Dust ignores him and barrels on.

“What I’m trying to say is that getting along is easy if y’know what they’re looking for.”

“Ah, manipulation.” Alastor nods in agreement. “Well, that’s easy enough.”

“Uh, not *manipulation.* You don’t have to be nice to each other, but you should learn about each other’s likes and dislikes. So for Husk here," Angel Dust places a hand on him, “he likes authenticity, which means?”

Angel Dust waits dramatically, cupping his hand to his ear. He’s met with the equally blank stares of Alastor and Lucifer, and he sighs in exasperation.

“Easy! I’ll tell him something truthful.” Angel Dust leans back against the couch. “You two need some serious socializin' classes or something.”

“So what are you gonna say to me?” Husk says, his cigarette smoke coiling around his head.

At this, Angel Dust looks uncharacteristically shy. His eyes dart from left to right, and he looks at Husk, *really* looks at him, and Lucifer suddenly feels like he’s intruding on something private.

“Well… seeing you after work is one of the things I look forward to the most, y’know?”

Husk is silent for a moment, and then a genuine smile spreads across on his face. “Well. Feeling’s mutual.”

Oh geez, Lucifer thinks, looking away from embarrassment.

He can see Charlie tearing up on the side -

Vaggie smiling softly and holding her close -

Niffty in her own world, stabbing a bug with concentration -

And Alastor, whose menacing hatred rolls off of his body in eerie, dark shadows.

“We are not doing any of that.” Alastor’s voice is thick, resembling radio static. His baleful aura makes Husk and Angel Dust sink deeper into the couch, trying but failing to hide from him. “In fact, I shall take my leave.”

Alastor turns to look at Lucifer and beckons him with his hand. "Join me in the hallway.”

“Me?” Lucifer says, taken-aback.

“Why, who else would I be speaking to?”

Lucifer looks around, but truthfully he didn't have a good answer to that either. "Okay, okay. Thanks you two for your… advice." He nods at Angel Dust and Husk, and they both offer an awkward wave good-bye.

They exit into the hallway, and he trails behind Alastor, watching as his tattered overcoat swishes behind him with every step he takes. Alastor is extremely quiet, and the less he talks, the more anxious Lucifer feels.

"So, uh. Why did you pull me aside?" Lucifer finally asks, stopping in his tracks. "I don't think you want to practice what the tall one was talking about."

"Absolutely not!" Alastor barks out a laugh, sounding both cruel and disbelieving. "I gave you a compliment earlier today. I believe you owe me one now."

"Compliment? You mean when you said I looked 5 feet tall?"

"And I meant every word of it!"

Lucifer slaps his hand to his face in frustration. "You have no idea how to give compliments, do you?"

"Wrong as always, sir. I've been told I have quite the silver tongue."

"Then they were lying to you."

"And are *you* a liar?"

Lucifer looks up, and he's startled to find Alastor's eyes boring into his own, glowing eerily in the dark. They're blood-red, and they look somewhat calculating. Somewhat indifferent.

A mystery, all the same.

Alastor drums his fingers against his radio cane as he waits for his answer, and the sound echoes in the empty hallway. Although it's unclear why Alastor's asking this, honesty may be the best policy here, and so he stares back resolutely.

"No." Lucifer's voice is firm. "I'm not."

Alastor's eyes widen. Just a little. It's only for a millisecond, and then he settles back into his usual unreadable smile.

Still though - he looks slightly pleased by his answer.

"Okay. A compliment, a compliment, what exactly should I say… you…" He looks at him up and down, and Alastor stands absolutely still during his inspection. "You've got sharp claws. Perfect for. Killing?"

Alastor's deer ears perk up.

“Indeed they are!” He cackles, inspecting his claws rather proudly. “I suppose I’ll see you tomorrow to resume this farce. To be continued?”

And with that, he disappears into the darkness.

Lucifer wasn’t expecting a huge, dramatic change in his schedule, but his days go by in such a normal manner that he almost forgets about the promise. The only difference is that Alastor searches for him once every 24 hours to exchange a ~~backhanded~~ compliment,

(“Why, you look healthier than yesterday, sir. Did you finally get some much-needed sleep?”

“Thanks. And did *you* get eye drops? Your eyes are a little less bloodshot than usual.”)

do something that was ~~barely~~ helpful,

("Oh my! Are you aware that you have a piece of lint on your shoulder? Let me get that for you so as not to sully your royal hands."

"Wow. You know what? Your jacket is in tatters - why don't I get you a new one?")

and then Alastor purposefully avoids him for the rest of the day, choosing to vanish into thin air whenever Lucifer walks into the room, which is rather…

insulting, if he’s being honest.

But Lucifer doesn’t know how far he wants to go for this promise, so he kind of puts up with it for now. Even though bumping into Alastor is truly the worst part of his day.

(Every. Single. Day.)

Charlie studies the two of them attentively - Lucifer organizing books in one room, Alastor ordering Husk around in another - and she lets out a deep sigh.

“Vaggie, do you think my dad and Alastor are getting along?” She asks worriedly. “They've barely talked to each other *at all* these past few days.”

“Isn’t that what you wanted?" Vaggie says. "You wanted them to stop fighting, right?”

“Yes, but I can tell that they still hate each other! The whole point was that they can at least shift from feelings of hate to feelings of… neutral!” Charlie lights up when she thinks of an idea. “You know what? I’m gonna give them a helping hand!”

Vaggie pauses sweeping the floors to look at Charlie. “Sweetie, I know you mean well, but I’m not sure how good this is going to go.”

“It’ll be fine! I’m just going to organize a little something. Will you and Niffty help me?”

Vaggie smiles softly and clasps Charlie’s hand with her own. “Of course, Charlie. You know I’ll always support you.”

Charlie beams at her, and they dash off together to start planning.

“So, welcome, everyone.” Charlie claps her hands together. They’re situated back in the lobby, but this time there’s a large podium in the centre. A colourful banner is strung across the top of the stage that says

TRUSTING 101,

and Charlie stands in the centre with a microphone in her hands.

“Our suggestion today is to do the trust fall again. Neither of you were here for the last one, so we’ll demonstrate how to do it first! It’s pretty simple: you share something vulnerable with the group about yourself, fall backwards, and then we’ll catch you!”

“Vulnerable?” Lucifer repeats, glancing shiftily at Alastor. “I *really* don’t want to say anything too personal in front of this guy.”

“What a shame.” Alastor is positively dripping with sarcasm. “I looked forward to learning about your hopes and dreams.”

“At least I have those!”

“You two need to stop your arguing and let Charlie finish explaining.” Vaggie threatens, shoving her finger against Lucifer’s chest. Lucifer immediately clams up, and Alastor stands patiently with his hand on his cane.

“Thank you, Vaggie.” Charlie says gratefully. “So, we’ll have Niffty show us! Please say something, um, less scary this time?”

“Yay, I’m up!” Niffty runs up to the podium and bounces up and down in place, giggling when her eye lands on Lucifer.

“I’m Niffty, and I like bad boys! And that of course includes *you,* mister-ultimate-bad-boy!” Niffty points towards Lucifer, and he laughs awkwardly, looking away from her.

“Oh! You flatter me. I’m just a simple man, really.”

“Sim-ple indeed!” Alastor sing-songs. “Some may even say a real *simpleton.”*

“STOP.” Vaggie grabs Lucifer’s shoulder before he can respond, and he swallows down the insult he was about to spew at Alastor.

“CATCH ME!” Niffty jumps right off of the stage, and everyone runs to grab her except for Alastor, who merely observes from afar. Niffty shrieks in delight, and she hops off from their hands. “I wanna go again!”

“Maybe later, Niffty.” Charlie pats her head appreciatively. “Thanks for your help! So that was how you do it - which one of you wants to go first?”

Lucifer and Alastor take this moment to size each other up. Alastor’s expression is impassive as usual, but his deer ears flick downwards, and Lucifer’s eyes follow the movement. Which makes him realize something:

it meant that Alastor was *irritated.*

“Charlie,” Lucifer sighs out, “he's not going to catch me.”

A flicker of surprise passes through Alastor’s eyes, but he quickly smooths out his expression.

“Oh you. Catching you would be easy, sir. You’re so small that you’d fit in one hand.” Alastor uses his index finger and thumb as the measurement method, purposefully making the distance as short as possible. “I just have doubt that you have the strength to catch *me,* so I would much rather not participate.”

“You’re so full of shit.” Lucifer shoves him roughly, and Alastor bares his teeth in response. “You’re just afraid, aren’t you? Too scared to reveal something about yourself?”

“Afraid?” Alastor’s shadow starts crawling out from his back, and he leans into Lucifer’s personal space, his red eyes brimming with barely-contained rage. “I have never felt fear in my life.”

“Prove it, then.”

They glare at each other tersely.

Lucifer suppresses the urge to push him again.

And Charlie bites her nails from the sheer anxiety.

“Alright, your majesty.” Alastor relents, snapping his neck to the side. “Your wish is my command.”

“Thank you for volunteering, Alastor! Okay, please step onto the podium.” Charlies says, relieved, and she gestures towards the stage.

Alastor’s shoes are audible with every step he takes,

click-click-click,

and he stands centre-stage once he reaches the podium.

“Something vulnerable, hmm?" Alastor places a finger on his chin in thought. "Well! If you tune in to my radio show, you may find that I am rather fond of jazz music.”

Lucifer waits for him to expand on his statement, but Alastor stops talking and turns around, his back towards them.

“Will his royal highness please make his way over?” Alastor calls out mockingly.

“I’m here, douchebag.” Lucifer rolls his eyes, and prepares his arms to catch him. “Ready when you are.”

Alastor falls down in a surprisingly graceful manner, and lands snugly in Lucifer’s arms. He realizes a moment too late that he’s holding Alastor bridal-style, one arm wrapped around his waist, the other tucked underneath his legs, and it’s… uncomfortably intimate.

Although, Lucifer is pleased to look down at Alastor for once, watching how his eyelashes cast shadows on his cheekbones. Even his fluffy ears and little antlers are admittedly.

A bit.

Endearing.

And completely at odds with the rest of Alastor, who was all blood and malice.

“HAH!” Lucifer says triumphantly. “See? I told you I could lift you!”

Alastor gazes up at him, and Lucifer is caught off guard by how large his red eyes looked.

“Let go.” Alastor says curtly. There isn’t an ounce of humour in his voice, and Lucifer feels Alastor’s body tensing up. He drops him, and Alastor lands on his feet, straightening up his jacket and looking at anywhere but him.

“We are done here.” Alastor says tightly. “I am retiring to my room. If you value your life, you will not speak to me for the rest of the day.”

Lucifer’s jaw drops at this.

He’s annoyed and upset and confused and -

he yanks on his radio cane to pull him down to eye level, his golden eyes glowering into Alastor’s red ones.

“Are you *serious?* You refuse to listen to advice, you barely say a word to me these past few days, and you can’t even pretend to be interested in this?” Lucifer growls, and he tosses Alastor’s cane to the side. “You know what? I’m heading up to my room. Thank you ladies for your time.”

He then raises both of his middle fingers up at Alastor. “And FUCK you, bitch.”

He teleports away without saying good bye.

He can’t face Charlie’s disappointment.

(again.)

“Why is nothing working?” Charlie cries out. They’re dismantling the podium, and she's struggling to put the banner away when Vaggie pries it out of her hands.

“Maybe we should stop doing this trust fall. ” Vaggie says softly. “I mean, it was kind of a bust last time too.”

“I know, I just… I thought I could be helpful, but I pushed too hard again. Just like when I bothered Angel about Valentino.” Charlie curls her arms around her knees. Vaggie kneels down beside her, and she carefully brushes Charlie’s hair out of her eyes.

“Oh hon, I think this is one of those things that only they can tackle. They’re going to have to figure it out on their own.”

“Right. You’re right!” Charlie lifts her head up and looks at Vaggie, her eyes glossy with unshed tears. “I should have done this trust fall myself; I need to learn that I can trust them to handle it. I’m sure it’ll work out!”

Vaggie thinks back on the past few days -

the bickering,

the deliberate avoidance,

the *burning down of hotel rooms,*

and tries to smile reassuringly. “Right. Uh… I’m sure they’ll resolve it.”

Lucifer stares deeply into the soulless eyes of a rubber duck.

“That maniac should be grateful I’ve been so patient.” Lucifer mutters. “I mean, I HELD HIM! In my ARMS! I haven’t even done that for anyone since -”

He pauses for a moment, and looks at the duck in his hand forlornly.

“Since Lilith.” He murmurs.

He tries not to think about her, but on nights like these, when he has no one to turn to, it’s easy to wonder where she went. He looks at his wedding ring, and considers for the millionth time to take it off.

The shiny gold band glistens tauntingly underneath the light, and he clenches his hand against his chest. He can’t bear to remove it, somehow. He still feels sentimental about the

whole thing, even though they're separated, even though her memory is more of a whisper than a shout, even though she abandoned him and their kid to go *who knows where* for years -

"Knock-knock!" Alastor materializes out of nowhere, and Lucifer yelps loudly, dropping the duck in the process.

"Wh- YOU! I told you to knock first!"

"Well, I said it, didn't I? Knock-knock!" Alastor says, sitting back onto the edge of his bed, just like he did a few days ago. Lucifer rolls onto his side to avoid looking directly at him, too drained from spending the whole day together.

"You know what? That is so beyond the point right now. What the hell do you want?" Lucifer sounds sulky, even to his own ears. "I thought you told me not to speak to you for the rest of the day."

Alastor stands up and and walks to the other side of the bed, venturing back into Lucifer's eye line. "Well, that was the day - and now it's evening!"

Lucifer is suddenly seized with the urge to smother him with a pillow.

"I *really* don't want to see your stupid face right now."

"Now, now. I admit my participation has been… shall we say, less than satisfactory? I originally planned on doing the bare minimum, but it seems that I have upset you."

"I'm not upset." Lucifer grumbles, but it sounds unconvincing even to himself. "Okay - fine, *yes*. I am upset. But only because I know this is important to Charlie, and I want to at least try to get along. For her sake."

"Well then. We are on the same page." Alastor says brightly. "I would like to rectify my past behaviour. We made a deal, after all."

"Not a deal."

"A pinky promise, nonetheless!"

Lucifer groans at this and glances at Alastor from the corner of his eye, feeling increasingly exasperated by the conversation.

"Then you know what? If you still want me to owe you a favour, you're gonna have to explain yourself. What the hell happened today?"

Alastor's smile freezes on his face, and his eyes dart towards the door, as though contemplating if he should run away or not.

"About what?" Alastor says coyly.

"Oh, *you know* what. The trust fall?" Lucifer demonstrates by holding his arms out. "Did I, uh. Hurt you, or something?"

“You? Hurt *me?”* Alastor sounds so incredulous that Lucifer feels a little offended, actually. “What a ridiculous notion, sir.”

“Uh, first of all, NOT ridiculous at all, but whatever.” Lucifer huffs. “And secondly…why, then?”

Alastor turns around, his back facing towards him. His claws clutch the sheets in a white-knuckled grip that threatens to rip through the fabric, and he doesn’t speak for so long that Lucifer half-expects him to just disappear into the night.

“I’m.” Alastor grits his teeth.

Lucifer waits.

“Not *comfortable."* He takes a beat. "With. Physical contact.”

“What?” Lucifer says, turning to look at him. All he can see is Alastor’s back, and he has no idea what kind of expression he has on.

“The trust fall." He exhales. "It was rather... overwhelming.”

Every word sounds like it’s being ripped out of his mouth against his will.

"Um. Oh."

“It is manageable if I initiate it.” Alastor continues. “Or if I have known them for many, many years.”

“Huh.”

“Your monosyllabic words are such poetry to my ears, sir.” Alastor says acerbically.

“NO, no! I’m just - surprised.” Lucifer admits. “But, um. I must be the last person you’d want to say this to.”

“An accurate statement.” Alastor finally turns around, his trademark smile stretching from ear to ear. “Although it's for the best that I tell you now, in case you want to do something like that again.”

“I didn’t *want* to hold you!”

“Really? You certainly fooled me.”

“Yeah, well, there’s only one fool here, and it’s you!”

“Oh my! What a biting remark!”

Lucifer lunges forward to grab Alastor’s jacket - and stops abruptly. As he hastily retracts his hand, Alastor watches him with rapt attention.

“What exactly are you doing?”

“I’m - respecting your space?” Lucifer crosses his arms uncomfortably. “You just said that you weren’t comfortable with others touching you.”

“Does his majesty care for me? How very touching.”

“In what universe would *this* -” Lucifer gestures wildly at the space between them - “look like I *care?* Go rot in hell!”

“Already here!”

Lucifer muffles a groan in his hands, but Alastor grabs him by his shirt collar, pulling him in so close that their noses graze each other.

“Fighting is different.” Alastor’s eyes morph into radio dials, and they appear luminous in the dim lighting of the room. “As the intention is to beat and subdue.”

He’s okay with violent contact, but not friendly ones? Lucifer thinks, confused.

The more he learns about Alastor, the less he understands.

“If you tell anyone, I will personally rip your entrails out, tie them into a bow, and deliver you like a present onto Charlie’s doorstep.” The radio dials in his eyes slowly flick back and forth, and Lucifer slaps Alastor’s hand off of his shirt

“Don’t drag my daughter into this! Besides, I wouldn’t tell anyone anyway. Believe it or not, I’d rather not spend my free time talking about you.”

Despite Alastor’s bravado, Lucifer can recognize his discomfort in the air, his eyes gradually returning back to its normal red. It’s awkward - extremely so - but also nice that Alastor was willing to share such an intimate detail. He looks wholly uncomfortable, based on the flattening of his deer ears.

“Well, thanks." Lucifer says stiffly. "For... confiding in me. And, I’m really sorry for pushing you into the trust exercise -”

“Do NOT apologize to me.” Alastor growls, his voice dropping into almost pure static. “I am not interested in your pity.”

“I’m not pitying you!” Lucifer shakes his head in frustration. Alastor always found a way to twist his words around, and it was starting to mess with his head. “I’m just kind of glad it wasn’t personal.”

“Personal?” Alastor echoes.

“Like, I thought that maybe I smelled bad or something, and that’s why you left.”

Alastor’s surprise on his face is comically visible.

“Rest assured, sir. You do not… smell bad.” His radio filter slips off, and Lucifer can hear his real voice chucking quietly. “In fact, you smell…”

“What?”

“Never mind.” Alastor says. He gets off of the bed and stands far away, a clear indication that he’s ending the topic there, full-stop. “Well then! I should probably get to the reason why I’m here.”

“You actually had a *reason?”*

“Why, of course. I wouldn’t drop by just to ‘hang out’.” Alastor makes air quotes with his hands, copying what Lucifer did before. “I’ll leave once you tell me about your favourite pastime.”

“Are you… are you asking about my likes and dislikes?” Lucifer blinks at this. “Like what the… Angel and uh, the cat - Husk - told us to do?”

“No need to spill your heart out.” Alastor ignores his question. “Just tell me one thing that you enjoy doing.”

Lucifer weighs his options. He could either suggest something outlandish and uncomfortable to disarm him, or he could just be honest and say something that might actually interest Alastor. As he mulls over his choices, he thinks back to the trust exercise. Alastor mentioned he liked jazz music. If so…

“Well, I like…” Lucifer hesitates for a moment. “Playing music. Mostly the fiddle. But I can play other instruments, too.”

For a split second, Alastor looks delighted at his disclosure. “How unexpected! I also enjoy performing. I’m partial to the piano.”

“Oh. Well, at least we have one thing in common.” Lucifer actually cracks a small smile at this.

“Two things.”

“What?”

“We have two things in common." Alastor lifts up two fingers as an emphasis. "Playing music, and taking care of the hotel."

“You do take this bellhop job quite seriously.” Lucifer acknowledges.

“Again, I am *not* a bellhop.” Alastor’s eye twitches, and he lets out a sigh. “Well, your majesty, as entertaining as this has all been, I will have to bid you farewell for tonight.”

“Hold on!” Lucifer avoids touching him, instead choosing to grab his cane to stop him. “You can't leave until you give me a compliment. Don't think you can weasel your way outta this.”

Alastor looks curiously at Lucifer’s hand on his cane. There's a small moment of silence between them, before Alastor slowly flicks his gaze back towards him.

“Hmm. Very well. I will confess that you are much stronger than you look. I didn’t think your spindly arms could keep me upright during Charlie’s little exercise.”

“HEY! These ‘spindly’ arms are pure muscle, alright!” Lucifer says indignantly.

“Whatever you say!”

As they stand face-to-face, Lucifer waits for Alastor to dissipate into the air and leave. Unexpectedly, Alastor leans in and says:

“Well?”

“Well, what?”

“Well, what compliment are you going to give me today?” Alastor yanks his radio cane closer, and the action makes Lucifer stumble forward, almost touching him- but not quite.

“Right.”

Lucifer contemplates for a second. What exactly should he compliment, even?

“I like… your…” he thinks about Alastor’s deer ears, flicking this way and that, a far better reflection of his moods than any of his facial expressions. So he points at Alastor’s head. “That.”

“You like my face?”

“HELL no!” Lucifer shouts, cheeks burning. “I was talking about your *ears!* Fuck!”

“Oh my! Did I make you blush?” Alastor snickers, his laughter increasing as Lucifer’s cheeks continue to redden.

“I don’t blush! And - you know what, this,” Lucifer gestures to his flushed cheeks, “THIS is completely unrelated. In fact, I think I’m running a fever. So GOOD NIGHT!” He spits out angrily, and he teleports out of the room.

A few seconds later, he teleports back.

“This is actually my room.” He says abashedly. “So I’m gonna need you to go.”

If Alastor was being honest, this was *not* how he wanted the night to progress.

Well. What can he possibly do with that information, anyway? Alastor thinks. He's still standing in the hallway outside of Lucifer's room, ruminating over their conversation. It's not a particularly interesting fact. Nor is it even a debilitating weakness, as Alastor is perfectly capable of exterminating any and all his enemies.

But Lucifer was… odd.

And strangely accommodating.

"A deal is a deal, after all." Alastor mutters. "Even the awful ones must be upheld."

Chapter End Notes

Fun Facts:
- Lilith will not appear in this story, but they will mention her every now and then.
- I have some instances of foreshadowing here! I'll mention it again once they come back.

You can reach me on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites + Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

The Duet

Chapter Notes

CH. 3 FANART:
- drawn by @dare-to-day-dream
- drawn by @samuraimomo12

Thank you! You can find me on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites + Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After Alastor leaves Lucifer's room, he goes to search for Niffty, his deer ears flat on his head from annoyance. He spies her running around in the lobby, holding a mousetrap in one hand and a piece of cheese in the other.

"Ah, Niffty." He calls out. Niffty scampers over, and climbs onto his shoulders.

"Alastor!" She says cheerfully. "How was talking to the royal hottie?"

"This whole promise is… aggravating!" Alastor grits through his teeth. "I've shook on many-a-deal, Niffty, and showered souls with endless money and power - but this may be the worst one I've embarked on. The terms are far too vague, and there is no end in sight. Ha-HA! I am on the verge of snapping!"

"Well, sir, you know what I do with difficult bugs?" Niffty says. "I set down a yummy trap to catch it. Like cheese!"

"Niffty, my dear, I believe cheese is for rats."

"Everyone likes cheese!" She declares. To demonstrate, she tosses down her block of cheese onto the ground, and they both watch as a bug curiously crawls over to it. She leaps off his shoulder to plunge her knife into the pest, all while giggling maniacally. "See? DONE!"

"Perhaps you are right." Alastor admits. "It can be easier to lure someone in with the carrot rather than the stick."

"Is everything about this super awful? Do you want me to kill him?"

Alastor opens his mouth to reply with an *'of course'* until he really thinks about him. Prideful, awkward Lucifer. So quick-witted, yet he wears his heart on his sleeve. Lucifer irritates him to no end, but somehow, Alastor still finds his antics rather...

...intriguing.

Alastor turns to Niffty, his eyes dancing with amusement.

“Well! I suppose it will pass the time. And you know how I hate being bored.”

Lucifer knows he has to find Charlie to apologize, but he’s feeling a mix of dread, regret and fear - which is not something he normally associates with seeing his daughter.

I hope she’s not too angry, Lucifer thinks worriedly, swivelling around to look for her. He spies her tell-tale blonde hair in the distance, and when she turns around, he lifts his hand up to wave.

“M-morning!” He stutters, and then curses himself for not keeping his cool. Charlie’s eyes widen when she sees him, and he braces for her reprimand.

Instead, she runs over frantically, her expression open and concerned.

“Dad!” Charlie looks so apologetic that Lucifer feels even *worse,* somehow. “Dad I’m so so so so SO SORRY about what happened last night- I really shouldn’t have pushed- I know there are boundaries and I just want to help- I’m sorry about all of this- ”

“Charlie, wait!” Lucifer says, gripping onto her shoulders to try and steady her. “It’s all good! In fact, I’m the one who should say sorry. I mean, everything that you all said really helped.”

She furrows her eyebrows together, looking unconvinced. "You don’t have to comfort me, dad.”

“No, really! Actually, he came to my room last night.”

“Wait, what?" And now Charlie seems confused. "To fight?”

“No, to apologize. Well - his version of an apology, anyway.” Lucifer says, reflecting on their conversation. “And it was surprisingly… okay, in the end. He, um.”

He pauses here, considering if he should divulge Alastor’s secret or not. But when he thinks about his discomfort, his hand fisting the sheets as he spoke, Lucifer makes up his mind:

It’s not his place to say.

“He confessed something to me.” He says instead. “And I think I understand him a bit better, now.”

“He… confessed to you?” Charlie blinks at this.

“Yeah, something big.”

When Lucifer doesn’t elaborate, Charlie drops the topic, heaving a sigh of relief instead.

“So you’re okay? I didn’t ruin any chance of you two being friends?”

“Charlie.” Lucifer fixes her with a stare. “You could never ruin anything. Alright?”

“Aww, dad!" Charlie beams. "I’m so happy to hear that! If you ever need anything, and I mean *anything,* you have to let me know. Okay?”

“Shouldn’t that be my line?” He says playfully. They laugh together, and for the first time in a long while, Lucifer feels like everything’s going to turn out fine.

He’s making breakfast the next time he sees Alastor.

The thing is, Lucifer's not quite sure where they stand with each other. He half-expects Alastor to take one look at him and walk in the opposite direction, which is what he usually did. But what Alastor *actually* does is enter the kitchen, sniff the air suspiciously, and then cover his nose with his hand.

“What is that awful smell?”

Lucifer’s mouth twists into a frown. “What do you mean *awful?* It’s the smell of pancakes!”

“Eugh.” Alastor makes a retching sound, his smile stretched thin. “Sugar first thing in the morning?”

“Oh, and what do you eat that is soooo much better?” Lucifer says sarcastically, expertly flipping a pancake onto his plate. Alastor strides over and pushes him to the side, all the while ignoring his resentful cries of *hey!*

“Step aside, your majesty. I shall teach you what an appropriate breakfast looks like.”

Alastor reaches into the pantry to procure:

- a glass coffee maker
- a bag of coffee beans
- and a gooseneck kettle

Once he's assembled everything, Alastor elegantly pours hot water over the finely-ground beans. The action makes the air smell nice and toasty, as though they were in a café. It's unexpectedly... nice, watching him do this so deftly, and Lucifer stares as Alastor pours his coffee into a cup (it says *Oh Deer!* on the side).

The moment is ruined, however, when Alastor does something really fucking repulsive. He opens up the fridge, pulls out a huge piece of rotten venison, and plops it down onto the table.

“Now onto the main meal!” Alastor says cheerfully. “Perfection, don't you think?”

The sophisticated coffee set, juxtaposed with the carcass of a discoloured deer, is too much for Lucifer to handle. He covers his nose with his hand, mimicking Alastor's action from earlier and feeling thoroughly nauseated.

“That. Is. DISGUSTING!”

“Really now?" Alastor’s eye twitches at this, visibly annoyed. "Coming from someone who has the taste-buds of a child?”

“These are delicious!” Lucifer waves his stack of pancakes in front of him. “I’m not sure how anyone could like something that looks past its expiration date.”

Without even asking for permission, Alastor rips off a corner from his pancake, and throws it into his mouth. He immediately makes a face, and spits it back into his handkerchief.

“As I suspected." Alastor sticks out his tongue, clearly repulsed. "Far too sweet.”

Lucifer gapes down at his pancake, which now has a tear in the corner. “Uh, I didn’t even *offer* you any!”

“I’ll leave you to finish your candy alone, sir." Alastor says, his coffee cup in one hand, the plate of venison in the other. "I’m afraid I can’t babysit you this morning.”

And he vanishes into shadow.

Once he's certain that Alastor's gone, Lucifer sags down onto the ground, eyeing his ruined plate of pancakes.

“What a jerk.” He murmurs, picking up the pancake that Alastor bit into.

But, well...

Alastor really just waltzed in, made conversation with him, and left without starting a physical altercation. Even his insults were a little more lighthearted than usual.

Is he actually trying to uphold his part of the promise? Lucifer thinks.

And then he shakes his head. *Nah. Couldn't be.*

He immediately throws away the pancake that Alastor touched.

Quite frankly, Lucifer feels even more grossed out when he steps into the garden.

Because.

He's greeted by the sight of Alastor cheerfully cutting into his slab of deer carcass, looking incredibly poised as he wipes his mouth politely with the corner of his handkerchief, and Lucifer fights the urge to call out,

fights and

fights -

“There is no way you’re actually eating that.” He blurts.

(Clearly, he lost that battle.)

“Did you want to try it?” Alastor takes a dainty bite from the deer, looking every bit the picture of poise. Lucifer makes a face and steps back in through the door.

“Maybe the coffee. But definitely not the venison.”

“You’re missing out!” Alastor calls out.

“I don’t think I am!” Nevertheless, Lucifer peeks out from behind the door frame.

“I did eat your food this morning, sir. Are you really saying you won’t give this a chance?" Alastor simpers. "Don’t you want us to get along?”

Lucifer bristles at the provocation. “You know what? I’m sure you tried really hard to hunt down that deer. Don’t want to take that away from you.”

“Why, I insist! No need to be so reserved around me, your majesty.”

Alastor stretches his arm out to hand him an unused fork. Lucifer's about to decline vehemently, but then he sees that Alastor's eyes issue him a challenge:

Are you brave enough to try?

Lucifer stares back hatefully in response:

Obviously. Now give me the fucking fork.

Their fingers brush against each other as he passes the utensil over, and Alastor jerks away at the brief contact, wiping his hand down with his napkin.

Am I really about to do this? Lucifer gulps, trying to suppress the urge to puke.

A bead of sweat rolls down his forehead -

Alastor’s eyes darken with expectation -

he’s slowly bringing the fork down -

“Dad! Alastor!” They both swivel around, and they see Charlie and Vaggie at the entryway. “Can you two meet us inside?”

“Yeah, of course!” Lucifer quickly drops the fork, and hurries back into the hotel.

Thank god. At least he has an excuse not to eat it.

Alastor watches as Lucifer dashes away, and he feels absolutely displeased by the turn of events.

Pity, he thinks. *It would have been fun to see him look disgusted.*

There's a certain delight in pushing Lucifer's buttons - the way that his eyes flash with fury, how his face reddens in hue, the audible anger in his voice...

Well. He'll certainly have more opportunities to taunt Lucifer. Alastor quickly shoves the rest of the meat into his mouth, and follows after him.

The four of them stand in the middle of the conference room to look at the charred wallpaper, the singed carpet, and the shattered chandelier. While it was destroyed weeks ago, neither he nor Alastor had finished patching it up, and its burnt state makes him feel rather guilty.

“Now, for what purpose did you bring us here?” Alastor asks.

“I am here to command you two as the owner of this hotel.” Charlie looks unusually strict, her posture stiff as a board. “I’ll have to pull rank. I think you should work together to return this room back to normal.”

After a beat, she cracks a nervous smile. “Please?”

“Charlie, you don’t have to say please.” Vaggie whispers, before looking at Lucifer and Alastor sternly. “This is now your responsibility.”

“Well, I had tried to fix it earlier, but *someone* was in the way.” Lucifer gives a pointed look to Alastor, who merely shrugs.

“Why, I was already in the middle of it when you arrived.”

"No, you were *not!* You just stood there - what, were you waiting for me to come, or something?"

Alastor's eyes widen at the accusation, and Lucifer falters for a second, surprised that he doesn't fire back a biting retort. Did he...

Did Alastor actually wait for me, that day?

Before Lucifer can further grill him about it, Charlie steps in-between them to get their attention.

“OKAY! I’ll trust you two to figure out what to do with this room.” Charlie crosses her arms at her chest, trying but failing to look intimidating. “I just wanted to bring it to your attention. Um. I’ll leave you to it?” At this, she turns to look at Vaggie, who gives her a supportive thumbs up.

“If this room still looks like shit by the end of the day, you’ll both be sorry. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?” Vaggie threatens.

“Loud and clear, my dear.” Alastor does a mock salute, and Vaggie rolls her eyes, holding Charlie’s hand as they exit the room. Once they're gone, Alastor turns to look at Lucifer.

“Shall we begin the renovations, your majesty?”

Without waiting for his reply, Alastor waves his radio cane, and his little shadow minions pop out. They all bear an uncanny resemblance to Alastor - sharp teeth, strikingly red eyes, and an evil grin.

“Uh, what exactly do those creatures of yours do?” Lucifer asks.

“Whatever I tell them to do!” He lifts one of them up by its neck, and it squirms in his grip. “What do *you* bring to the table, sir?”

“The better question is, what *can’t* I do?” To demonstrate, he spins his giant hotel key and aims it at the floor, summoning a giant apple-patterned carpet in an instant. “I can pre-tty much make anything.”

“Anything?” Alastor leans in, his eyes flashing with interest.

“Anything.”

“Can you make a radio then?”

“Duh!” Lucifer points at the centre of the room, and he synthesizes a large, old-fashioned radio in an instant. It’s practically the same height as him, and Alastor hums in appreciation at the sight.

“Not bad.” Alastor remarks. “But it could use a little more colour, don’t you think?”

With the snap of his fingers, Alastor alters the radio to cherry red.

“I prefer this shade. Isn’t it such an improvement? Now everyone can hear my broadcast.”

“Not everyone tunes in.” Lucifer rolls his eyes. “I’ve never even heard of your little show before.”

“I find that hard to believe.” Alastor’s smile twitches, his irritation visible. Lucifer is, admittedly, a bit intrigued at what Alastor would even talk about on his show, but he doesn’t want to give him the satisfaction.

“Oh, you know. I have a life. Ever heard of that?”

“That’s not something most people have in Hell, sir. We’re all dead sinners here.”

Lucifer is about to yell back when he feels something tug at his pants. When he looks down, he sees one of Alastor’s shadow creatures trying to gnaw through his leg, and he yelps at the sight.

“URGH! Get this thing off of me!”

“Leave.” Alastor’s voice lowers in octave, and his commanding tone makes them all freeze up in fear. They don't make a move at all- not until Alastor's smile widens. “Now be useful and sweep up the debris.”

The small shadow creatures scurry around quickly, cleaning up the mess and throwing away the garbage. They spend the rest of the afternoon fixing up the room, but every time Lucifer summons something, Alastor trails behind him to modify it.

When he hangs up the chandelier:
- Alastor swaps out the crystal pieces for blood-red rubies.

When he embellishes the trim with apple motifs:
- Alastor adds little pinstripes in the background.

And when he creates stained glass windows with yellow ducks walking through a garden:
- Alastor taps on it and inserts a deer to accompany them. It almost looked like the deer was always meant to be in the scene.*

(*Lucifer was actually okay with this particular change.)

They make quick work of it, and when the room is finished, Lucifer doesn’t even know what to say.

Good work?

Yay, us?

“Should I call Charlie in?” He settles on instead.

“She will find out on her own.” Alastor shrugs, already turning around on his heel. “I have had enough of you for one day, so I’ll take my leave.”

“Hey!” Lucifer protests, not wanting him to get the last word in. “I’m tired of seeing your face too!”

Alastor’s grin grows at this, and he feels vaguely like he fell for some kind of trick.

“I thought you weren’t a liar, sir?”

“Huh?”

“Did you forget? You *explicitly* told me that you liked my face!”

“That is NOT what happened!” Lucifer feels hot with mortification. “I already said that I was talking about your ears!”

Alastor flicks his deer ears (on purpose, definitely).

“And *why* do you like them?”

Well.

The thing is.

Lucifer likes them because they’re...

...expressive.

Alastor’s face was so unreadable - mostly a permanent smile accompanied with disdainful eyes - but his ears would flick up with interest, lay flat with unease, and twitch when he was paying attention.

Like hell I'm gonna say any of that, Lucifer thinks. If Alastor knew, he would probably wear a hat or something. *Just* to piss him off.

“You shouldn’t fish for compliments.” He says instead, grinning cheekily. Alastor looks so affronted by this that he visibly recoils away.

“Killjoy.”

“Whatever, egomaniac.”

Shooting him one last withering smile, Alastor melts into the shadows and disappears.

Over the next week, the room quickly becomes Lucifer’s favourite place to visit. The refurbished space was normally empty, and he enjoyed all the custom details he incorporated into the decoration.

There was one slight, teensy problem, however: Alastor had also thrown in his own finishing touches, so it kind of reminded him of *Alastor* as well.

Still, it's not too bad. When Lucifer couldn't sleep - which was most nights - he could walk over and stare at the stained glass windows, his eyes following the little yellow ducks that were being lead by a tall, dignified deer. It even helps act as a distraction, until...

Until he remembers Lilith.

(She's always there, in the back of his mind. Plaguing his memories.)

Truthfully, he misses being with someone. The sting of her departure has finally left, but he's still swimming in its wake, wondering if he could ever fill that void.

His eyes wander over to the radio in the corner, and he recalls Alastor mentioning his fondness for jazz music. There's a fleeting desire to knock on his door to ask if he wants to perform together, but there are three problems:

1. It's 2 am
2. There is no way Alastor would say yes
3. It'll probably be *painfully* awkward

Even so, he conjures up his fiddle, the golden instrument fitting perfectly in his hands.

"Well, I can practice on my own." He mutters, plucking out a few notes. The sound echoes in the room, soft and weak, and he puts it down immediately. He suddenly lacks the desire to play music.

The door creaks open, and in a flash he bolts up, the bow of his fiddle pressing down on the neck of the intruder.

"It's… you?" Lucifer says, surprised. Alastor is standing in front of him, his hands crossed neatly at his back. "WAIT wait wait - *please* don't tell me you can read minds."

"Unfortunately no, sir! But I am keen to know what you mean by that."

Lucifer gulps, not wanting to come clean about.

Well.

I'm not gonna say I was THINKING about him, god.

In lieu of explaining, Lucifer gestures gracelessly to his fiddle.

"Guess what! I found my fiddle. And. I know you said you liked the piano, so…"

He's not sure if Alastor was offering to play together, or if he just wanted to know what his hobby was. But when Alastor makes no show of leaving, Lucifer decides to take a leap of faith.

"Should we? I dunno. Practice something?"

Alastor's pupils widen by just a fraction.

“Are you asking me to a duet?”

“Uh." Lucifer pauses. "Well, sure, if you want to put it that way.”

“Why?”

This was not what Lucifer expected him to say.

“What do you mean, *why?”* He says, perplexed. “I mean, you said you liked playing music, right? I do too.”

Alastor still looks suspicious, and he carefully walks in circles around Lucifer, resembling a hawk stalking its prey. “And what do you want in return?”

“HUH? I don’t - I’m just asking if you’d like to perform something. Together!” Lucifer regrets asking more and more by the second. “Never mind. Just forget it.”

“No take-backs!” Alastor suddenly stops in front of him, and he leans

down,

down,

down,

all the way so that he’s right in Lucifer’s face. “No talking, and only playing music? Why, that sounds like a dream come true.” Alastor almost sounds sincere. “I have wanted to tackle this one.”

With the snap of his fingers, Alastor conjures up two copies of a music sheet and hands one to him. Although Lucifer doesn’t recognize the song title, he skims over the composition, and quickly ascertains that it’s easy enough to learn.

They’re standing on opposite corners of the rebuilt conference room, Alastor sitting in front of his glowing piano, Lucifer holding a golden fiddle, and they test out a few notes first. It’s been a while since Lucifer played a duet, but Alastor is admittedly a proficient musician, and it’s easy to accompany his part of the song. The music swells prettily, and they practice for so long that Lucifer loses track of time.

He only puts down his fiddle when he feels a crick in his neck.

“Giving up?” Alastor says airily.

“I NEVER give up,” is his knee-jerk reaction, and then Lucifer shakes his head. “Actually, hold it. It’s getting late, so I should probably head back.”

“Ah.” Alastor’s gaze is inscrutable, but as he puts away his piano, there’s a slowness to his movement.

Like…

he was hesitant to end the music practice.

But that couldn’t be it, right?

“I will confess that you are a decent fiddle player.”

“Oh.” It’s so far the nicest thing that Alastor has ever said to him. “Well, you’re... a good pianist.”

“Of course." Alastor shrugs his shoulders. "I already knew that.”

Lucifer snorts at this. “What kind of a response is *that?* Where's your humility?”

“Would it make you feel better if I fawned over your praise?” Alastor bats his eyelashes at him sardonically, his hand clasped underneath his chin as though he were star-struck. “Why, thank you, your majesty! I don’t deserve such flattery, your majesty!”

“Ugh, STOP!” Lucifer groans, covering his face to avoid looking at him. “Never do that again!”

Alastor barks out a laugh, seeming to revel in his pain. “Why exactly are you down here?”

“Why are *you* down here?”

“I believe I asked you first.”

“Nice, real mature.” Lucifer says wryly. “Well. Um. I couldn’t sleep. I was kinda..."

He trails off, unsure if he should admit the reason why. But Alastor just stands there, waiting for him to finish, so he lets out a sigh.

"I was thinking about Lilith.”

At her name, Alastor visibly prickles up in distaste. “Oh? And what about her?”

“I just- ” Lucifer bunches up his hair in his hands, and - he wants to talk about this with someone. Anyone. Even if that someone is *Alastor.* It's hard on his own, and he can't just tell

that to Charlie, who is already dealing with her own issues.

So he starts rambling nonstop.

“I was thinking about her absence, I guess - it’s just so weird living by myself - she was so magnetic- when she walked into a room, all eyes were on her. She felt larger than life- and I mean that literally too. Just so beautiful- god, and her height - she was so tall. I *loved* that.”

After Lucifer says this, he’s suddenly hyper aware of Alastor looming over him at seven feet tall, and the air around him threatens to suffocate him to death. He doesn’t dare to look over at him, but he can feel Alastor shaking beside him from suppressed laughter.

“Just DON’T.” Lucifer says immediately, slapping his hands over his face from embarrassment. “Can you pretend that I didn’t say that?”

“You are fresh out of luck. I never forget a thing someone tells me.” Alastor’s smile is eerie under the waning light. "So the king likes those who are taller, hmm?"

Lucifer's face feels hot. It's a bit mortifying, and not something that he has ever voiced aloud, save for himself in the privacy of his own room. He has noted that Alastor is much, much taller (and how could he not?) but it was more of a passing thought, born out of a distaste for constantly being looked down at.

When he finally glances over at Alastor, Lucifer clocks his shit-eating grin, and he wants to change the subject as soon as possible.

“Why are *you* down here?” He inquires again.

“Oh, I heard movement in the hotel. I thought it might have been an intruder, so I came here, but it was only you.” Alastor shrugs. “It's not a particularly compelling story, I’m afraid.”

“Shit, did I wake you?" Lucifer looks at him. "Sorry - ”

“Do NOT apologize.” Alastor snarls, and his hand grips around Lucifer’s shirt, his clawed fingers threatening to dig into his throat. It pricks his skin for a moment, and Lucifer winces at the contact. “I am not interested in appeasing your guilt.”

“OKAY!” Lucifer grabs Alastor’s arm in exasperation and yanks him off. His hand encircles Alastor’s bare wrist, warm and soft, and Lucifer drops him immediately as though it burned.

“You know what? Dealing with you is making me tired. I’m going to bed.”

As Lucifer summons a portal to go to his bedroom, Alastor chimes in:

“You’re welcome.”

“Huh?” Lucifer tilts his head.

“You were having trouble sleeping, weren’t you?” His teeth are bared in a devilish smile. “I must make for a terrific soporific, then.”

“Yeah, because you’re *boring!”* Lucifer hollers. When he steps into the portal, he can see Alastor’s eye twitch from anger in the distance, and Lucifer cackles as the gateway slowly closes.

And after he climbs into bed, he falls asleep instantly.

In the V Tower, Vox gathers Velvette and Valentino into the lobby. They’re both scrolling on their phones from sheer boredom, and Vox impatiently snaps his fingers to get their attention.

“Hey, you two bitches! Did you memorize my plan?”

“What is there to worry about?” Valentino looks up at him from behind his sunglasses. “You show Alastor your little blackmail, he’ll come running, and we’ll take him on. Was there something else to it?”

“Look, we have to make this enticing enough to get his attention.” Vox argues. “So we have to play it up. Make it dramatic!”

“Oh, shut it.” Velvette groans, swiping through Sinstagram to check on her likes. “We’ve already gone over it a million times!”

“Velvette, you’re not really giving me any confidence here.” Vox paces across the room unhappily. “But fine. We’ll launch it tomorrow morning.”

“No problem.”

“Agreed.”

“Meeting dissolved.” Vox says, staring at the paper in his hands. “Alastor, you fuck, when we see you tomorrow, you’ll be crushed. For good.”

Chapter End Notes

I think Alastor would enjoy making fun of Lucifer, even if they both find each other annoying. (So annoying that they can't stop thinking about each other!)

Fun Facts:
- Alastor WAS waiting for him to appear in the conference room
- We have reached the end of Act 1 (reluctant acquaintances) and we are now entering Act 2!

My Tumblr: @morningstarwrites + My Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

The Blackmail

Chapter Notes

CH. 4 FANART:
- drawn by @hawks-stan
- drawn by @snnuysuzuki
- drawn by @treasuredflame

Thank you so much! You can find me on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites + Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Alastor is passing by the television in the lobby when it crackles to life.

“Hey, fucker.” Vox's square head flickers on the monitor, his blue grin sharp and unfriendly. Alastor lets out an audible sigh, before looking at him coldly.

“Well! I don’t have time to deal with you, Vox.” He’s already walking away when Vox taps the screen angrily, the *bump-bump-bump* sound of his fist reverberating through the television.

“Get your ass to Pentagram City at noon today. We’ll be in the alleyway behind the VoxTek store.”

“Now, why would I do any of that?” Alastor lifts an eyebrow, but he does pause for a moment, watching as Vox starts to cackle.

“You’ll come unless you want everyone to see THIS.”

Alastor sucks in a breath when he sees what Vox is holding up.

“Fuck.”

Lucifer is in the kitchen again, looking at the ingredients in the pantry. He's considering making waffles for breakfast when he catches sight of Alastor's coffee maker, the glass sparkling under the morning light.

A bag of coffee beans is placed neatly beside it.

Maybe I can just take a look at it? Lucifer thinks. His fingertips graze the raffia bag, the material rough underneath his skin -

"Hey!"

"ARGH!" Lucifer shoves the coffee beans back into the pantry - slams the cabinet shut - spins around to look at the kitchen entrance, "I wasn't- "

Except.

It's not Alastor.

Lucifer lets out a sigh of relief when he realizes it's just Charlie and Angel Dust, huddled at the kitchen entrance.

Although, he's a little *less* relieved when he notices that they're glancing over at him, whispering furtively to each other the whole time.

"Okay, Angel Dust. Like we practised." Charlie clears her throat, and leans against Angel Dust dramatically.

"Oh, Angel, I really need some help on a project," she says loudly, "because I am oh-so-busy! Can you go and do it on my behalf?"

"Aw, Charlie." Angel Dust shakes his head. "I would, but I've got a filmin' sesh today. If only there was a *strong* and *powerful daddy* that can help us during our time of need?"

They both turn to look at him, Angel Dust batting his eyelashes, Charlie flashing a sweet smile, and Lucifer feeling very, *very* bewildered by the whole thing.

"Are you two performing a play?"

Angel Dust groans at this. "Charlie, I told ya - you're too stiff! You didn't come across as believable at all!"

"Sorry! I'll work harder at acting next time!" Charlie smiles anxiously at Lucifer. "No, dad, I'm trying to - *very subtly!* - get you to help me."

"Oh! You need help from the King of Hell?" Lucifer puffs up with pride, pleased that Charlie wants his assistance. "What do you need, Charlie? More renovations? Another champagne fountain?"

“Here you go!” Charlie hands over a tied-up scroll. “Can you buy some stuff for me? Everything on that list can be purchased within Pentagram City.”

“Hold up. You want me to… uh, run an… errand?”

It's not the kind of exciting task Lucifer had expected/hoped/liked to do, and Angel Dust sends him a scrutinizing look.

“Ya gotta work if you wanna stay, king. What, too good to do some chores?”

“Of course not!” Lucifer says quickly. “I’m happy to do anything that is within my power.”

“Great attitude, dad! Thank you!” Charlie smiles cheerfully.

And then she starts to look a little more abashed.

“But, um. It’s *really* a lot for just one person to carry. Like, it's just so much. I actually asked Alastor earlier if he could do this - since he agreed to help…”

Lucifer already knows where this is leading up to,

“and *you* also agreed to help…”

Charlie’s hand gestures towards him,

“you two should... go together?”

“Charlie.” Lucifer fixes her with an unimpressed look. “Did you plan for this all along?”

“Noooooo…” but Charlie can’t meet his eyes. “Okay, maybe a little! But you two seem to be doing better, so I figured why not?”

“Is he even free?” Lucifer huffs. “Isn’t he a part-time waiter or something?”

“Radio show host!” Charlie corrects him. “He did mention that he was busy, but when I asked where he was going, he said Pentagram City. So I kind of nudged him to accompany you until noon!”

“Uh-huh. I bet he was all like, ‘did you want me to supervise his majesty, my dear’?” Lucifer places his hands on his apple cane and stretches his smile from ear-to-ear, looking every bit like the spitting image of Alastor.

“Actually, yeah.” Charlie says, surprised. “You’re spot-on!”

“Wow.” Angel Dust snickers. “You should consider bein’ an actor!”

“Thank you, thank you.” Lucifer says, bowing theatrically as Charlie and Angel Dust clap at his performance.

The two of them teleport separately into the city, and convene in a deserted alleyway. Lucifer unfurls the long scroll, which

thwacks!

onto the ground, rolling out for an excessively long time.

“This may take longer than I expected.” Lucifer admits, skimming over the shopping list. “I mean, half of these things have to be fake - what exactly is ‘The Last Wish A Frog Makes Before It Dies’?”

“Why, that is clearly…” Alastor peers over his shoulder to look at the list. “Oh. Hmm.”

“Clearly what?” Lucifer asks. He can feel Alastor’s red hair graze his cheek, and when he looks up, Lucifer accidentally bumps his forehead against his chin. It happens for only a second, but Alastor stands up straighter, deliberately distancing himself further from him.

“Well, sir.” Alastor pauses. “I don’t know what any of these items are."

“Uh, what?”

“I have been gone for seven years.” Alastor shrugs, looking coolly indifferent. “What’s your excuse?”

“Well, *I* haven’t left my house in ages!”

They stare at each other blankly, and Lucifer comes to the realization that Alastor is definitely the *worst* shopping partner for this excursion.

“Are you saying that. Neither of us know. What to buy?”

“That certainly appears to be the case.”

“Hooooh boy.” Lucifer kneels down, and rolls up the paper in a panic. “This is not good.”

“Aw. Is the little king feeling down?” Alastor pats his shoulder condescendingly, and Lucifer smacks it away, glaring up at him.

“Quit that!”

Alastor ignores him, and plucks the scroll out of his hand.

“Why don't you just pop into a store and look around. You can *at least* read the labels. Unless..." Alastor looks at him from the corner of his eyes, his smile turning cruel. "Do you know how to read?”

“Do I know how to re- do *you* know how to talk to people?” Lucifer squawks heatedly.

“Why, I do!" Alastor cackles. "I just wouldn’t consider you a person.”

“I’m more of a person than you are, demon.”

“I disagree, angel.”

Lucifer’s jaw drops at this, and it takes him a moment before he realizes that Alastor wasn’t calling him by a term of endearment, but was referring to his previous status in Heaven. The silence stretches on for too long for Lucifer to brush it off and move on, and Alastor seems to realize his mistake retroactively.

“Fallen angel.” Alastor corrects himself. Lucifer swallows and stands up, adjusting his jacket to avoid making eye contact with him.

“Let’s just go read some labels.” He mumbles, yanking the scroll back from Alastor’s hands.

“Found it!” Lucifer picks up a purple vial of **The Last Wish A Frog Makes Before It Dies.** “Huh. I never would have guessed that this cleans stuff.”

He’s waiting for Alastor’s smart-aleck response, but when he’s greeted with silence, Lucifer turns around to look for him. Alastor is currently staring at the time, and the clock hands are positioned at ten.

“Hey.” Lucifer taps Alastor with the shimmering purple bottle. “You there?”

“Hmm?” Alastor swivels his head slowly to look at him. “Ah. So you’ve found it. Cross it out, sir.” He hands Lucifer a red pen before walking away, his deer ears flat on his head.

Strange. Lucifer watches as Alastor leaves, and he uses the pen to mark up the scroll. *Very strange.*

Lucifer's unwilling to admit it, but Alastor was right. They were able to load up their cart just by checking the store tags, and he had crossed out each item on the list with Alastor's pen. They're walking down the streets of Pentagram City, en-route to the hotel with a million shopping bags.

Although...

For the past hour, Alastor was uncharacteristically quiet. Lucifer had gotten so used to the rapid back-and-forth they shared that the silence felt suffocating, pressing in on him from all sides.

He peeks over, only to find that Alastor is already staring at him, gaze sparking like electricity when they make eye contact.

"AHEM-HMM-HMM!" Lucifer clears his throat. "So, uh. You were here when Charlie first started the hotel?"

"Not… exactly." Alastor looks suspicious at Lucifer's sudden inquiry, but continues to speak anyway. "I suppose it was still quite early on. I brought in Husk and Niffty. That effeminate fellow was already present by the time I arrived."

"And Maggie?" Lucifer asks, trying to sound nonchalant.

"Are you trying to investigate Charlie's lover?" Alastor's eyes dance with mirth. "Pretending to act like a *dad* now, aren't you?"

"I AM HER DAD!" Lucifer swings one of his shopping bags at Alastor's legs, but he dodges it deftly. "I'm not pretending to do anything - actually, *you're* the one who's playing parent here!"

"Why, she is practically my step-daughter!" Alastor guffaws, watching as Lucifer's face turns crimson with anger. "Can't we share custody of our dear Charlie?"

"Absolutely NOT!"

The giant clock tower suddenly strikes twelve, and Alastor looks up at it, his smile tightening at the sound. He tosses the rest of the shopping bags to Lucifer, who catches them with an *oof!*

“Well then - it’s time for me to take care of some business.” Alastor sounds tense, and his eyes dart from left to right, as if he were scouting the area.

“What business?” Lucifer asks. Alastor looks down at him, his eyes devoid of any warmth.

“Haven’t you heard that curiosity killed the cat?”

Alastor teleports away without waiting for a reply, leaving him alone in the middle of the road.

“Thanks for nothing, bitch!” Lucifer yells at nothing but air, which just pisses him off even more.

Whatever.

Lucifer ends up walking down the street by himself, lugging back an uncomfortable number of bags. Alastor had been up-front that he had to leave at twelve, but he had acted so withdrawn today. Judging by his reaction, it didn’t seem like he was going somewhere fun.

A shiny object in the window display catches his attention, and Lucifer stops walking to take a look at it. It’s a little red radio in the corner, reflecting off light from the sun, and its glossy surface resembles a candy apple.

The sign at the front says *DISCOUNT: 50% OFF* in elegant calligraphy, and it reminds him of…

Well…

“Oh, hell.” He murmurs, staring at the radio. “Why did you have to be red, too?”

Not that it matters *at all* what Alastor is up to.

But.

He quickly shoves their purchased items behind a bush, and he shape shifts into a small bird, soaring around in the sky to look for Alastor.

He’s been flying around Pentagram City for quite some time now.

The landscape looks dauntingly large from above, and Lucifer sighs at his fruitless endeavour. He’s gliding back to get their bags when he spots Alastor’s unmistakable red figure standing in an alleyway,

not alone,

and definitely not happy.

Lucifer quickly perches on the roof above him, checking the three other people standing in the backstreet:

- Person 1 - excessively tall, cyan-coloured television for a head.
- Person 2 - ridiculously long red overcoat, heart sunglasses.
- Person 3 - the shortest figure, with long curly hair.

“Do you have it, Vox?” Alastor asks evenly, but his rage is stewing underneath, manifesting itself in the form of his massive shadow.

“You want proof, fucker?” Vox waves around a piece of paper mockingly. “THIS is just a copy! I have three more back at V Tower: one’s the original, one’s on a USB, and one’s inside a computer!”

Alastor glares at the paper, before wrenching his gaze towards Vox instead. “And what, exactly, do you want from me?”

“I beat you last time, but you disappeared for seven years right after." Vox jabs a finger at him. "I demand a REMATCH!”

“So you bring Valentino and Velvette for backup?" Alastor taunts. "Truly powerless without the other overlords, aren’t you?”

“Oooooh, he got you good.” Valentino chuckles darkly, watching as Vox starts to shake from agitation.

“FUCK you! If you don’t want everyone to see this,” Vox waves the paper angrily, “you’ll fight us. RIGHT NOW!”

What the hell is on that thing? Lucifer thinks, staring at the paper. He swivels his head to look at Alastor, who looks more and more agitated by the second. *I guess I’ll just grab it, then.*

As Vox continues to hurl out insults, Lucifer swoops down and yanks the paper out with his talons, quick as a flash. He flaps his wings in the air, watching as Vox finally registers that his blackmail material was stolen away.

“What the hell was that?!” Vox yells, turning his head around to try and find him.

“Three-on-one is not a fair fight, guys.” Lucifer snorts. He’s perched on the rooftop, and he can see all of them staring up at him in confusion -

except for Alastor, whose searing glare can melt down glaciers.

“Why is that bird sassing us?” Valentino sounds amused. It’s after a moment that Lucifer realizes he hasn’t changed back yet, and he hastily transforms back, spreading his six wings out in full splendour.

“Uh, not a bird.” He says flatly. Velvette snaps her eyes up to look at him, and she lets out a huff.

“Cut the shit and leave, old man. This doesn't concern you.” She sneers, but her expression completely changes when she realizes who he is. “Oh fuck, that’s Lucifer!”

“Lucifer?” Valentino’s mouth turns into a firm line. “What is *he* doing here?”

“This isn’t over, Alastor!” Vox yells, and he turns to look at the other Vees. “Let’s fucking book it. I’m not gonna fight someone who beat the First Man.”

“See you next time!” Valentino sings out. He drops down a red smoke bomb that engulfs the alleyway, and in the blink of an eye, the three of them vanish into the air.

Lucifer flies down beside Alastor and lowers his wings, his hand still holding the paper.

“Who are those -”

“You.” Alastor snarls - pins Lucifer to the wall with his claws - mouth stretched into a fuming smile. He looks wild with fury, almost unrecognizable in his frantic state. “What are you *doing here?* I had it under control.”

“You’re gonna fight three overlords by yourself?” He can easily shake Alastor off, but he’s feeling immobilized under his intense gaze.

“I’ve fought by myself my whole life." Alastor grinds the words out of his teeth. "I don’t need anyone else.”

“That’s the dumbest shit that’s ever come out of your mouth!”

They’re stuck glaring at each other; Lucifer has his hands splayed beside him on the brick wall; he tries to back away further, but there's nowhere left to go.

“Tell me." Alastor's voice has fully plunged into radio static. "Why. Are. You. Here? And if you lie to me..."

His claws dig in deeper,

"I will rip you into a million little pieces so that *no one* can identify who you are.”

Lucifer bristles at the threat, because *how fucking dare he?* When Lucifer came because he- he was-

He yanks Alastor by his shirt collar, forcing him down so that they're face-to-face. "You were so fidgety and DISTRACTED today! I was worried!"

"Oh?" Alastor's tentacles start to extend from his back. "Worried that the *radio demon* was plotting something?"

For some reason, that's the final straw. Lucifer feels his patience snap, right in half, and he yanks at Alastor so harshly he practically wrings his neck.

"I WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU!" He roars. "It's always one step forward and two steps back with you! You piss me off so much! Is it SO CRAZY that I noticed you were acting weird, so I wanted to check on you?"

Alastor seems -

surprised.

Visibly so. His rage is still present, but his grip slackens on Lucifer's shoulders. "Are you trying to say that I'm *weak?"*

"NO! That is not - I…" Lucifer is so caught off-guard that he's at a loss for words. He takes in a breath,

inhale,

trying to figure out the best way to say it,

exhales.

"I..." He finally says, "I just wanted to help."

Alastor's eyes widen, and Lucifer loosens his hold on his shirt. He's suddenly aware that Alastor isn't even pinning him down anymore, but his hands are still on his shoulders, warm and steady instead of fierce and intimidating.

Lucifer finally lets go of Alastor's shirt, electing to smooth out the piece of paper in his hands. "What the hell is this, anyway?"

He looks down, and sees…

A picture.

of.

Alastor?

“Wait. This is a picture of you.” Lucifer blinks. “I mean… it looks pretty normal. What’s wrong with it?”

“What’s wrong is that it *exists.”* Alastor’s voice finally returns to his faux-pleasant tone, and he takes a careful step away from Lucifer. “This face is made for radio, you see. I always distort myself in images, except for this one. I need to destroy the rest of those photos! But now, he’s run off with them.”

There’s an implicit *thanks to you* that Alastor says with his eyes. It weighs down heavy between them, like a storm cloud threatening to rain, and Lucifer crumples up the picture in his hands from anger.

“So you’re just gonna, what? Go to their lair and fight to get them back?”

“Exactly. *I’m* going to the V Tower.” Alastor points at himself.

He then moves his finger towards Lucifer, his claw inches away from his face.

“You’re going back to the hotel.”

“You…” Lucifer feels a wild mix of emotions rip through him in an instant. Outrage. Annoyance. Exasperation.

But most of all, hurt.

“GO! See if I care!” Lucifer yells. With a great big flap of his wings, Lucifer bolts away into the sky.

Lucifer…doesn’t fly far.

He had landed back at the row of shops, and he’s currently pacing back and forth to soothe himself. He had considered going back to the hotel and bowing out of this whole situation, but he was still too incensed to just let it go.

“He’s more trouble than he’s worth.” Lucifer mutters. He stops walking to stare at a window display, and his eyes spot the same little radio in the window display, bright red in colour. He hesitates for a second and just… stares at it.

The longer he looks, the more upset he gets.

“FUCK!”

He leans back against a wall before slowly sliding downwards, all the way until he’s seated on the pavement. Lucifer places his head on his knees and wraps his arms around himself, mind swirling with the events that had just transpired.

It’s pretty clear that Alastor didn’t want him to help, and Lucifer wasn’t going to argue with him about it. He’s not the type to just do things out of the goodness of his heart; he wasn’t a saint, for god’s sake, and he certainly wasn’t going to help a sinner out if they didn’t even yearn for it.

And Alastor has barriers that go all the way up-up-up, spiky and overwhelming and inscrutable and…

His phone rings loudly in the silence - circus fanfare music blasting out at an obnoxious decibel - and when Lucifer checks that it’s Charlie calling, he presses **accept.**

“Hello?”

“Hey dad! Sorry, I forgot that there was one more item to purchase. Could you get ‘The Salamander’s Left Tear’?”

“Sure.” He immediately forgets the name of the item.

“You’re probably almost done right? Are you heading back?”

“Well… I’m kind of done. The thing is, Alastor left.” He sounds sulky, even to himself. “He’s doing something CRAZY and I offered to help and he said no and we argued and -” he stops himself from saying any more disjointed thoughts. “Sorry. Yes, I’m heading back now.”

“Oh my gosh, dad! What’s he doing? Is he gonna be okay?”

“He’s just, it’s, uhh.” Lucifer pauses, debating what his next word should be.

“Personal.”

Yes, he doesn’t have any sense of loyalty towards Alastor. *Yes,* he’s been a major pain in the ass this whole fucking time.

But.

There’s still the unspoken agreement that he should be… cautious. If Alastor hadn’t told anyone he was meeting the Vees today, it was definitely a private situation, and he’s not the type to just blather on about someone else’s business.

“He’s such a douchebag about it though! And it would be so easy for me to do it, no sweat off my back. He’s so goddamn DIFFICULT! It’s just, he clearly established a boundary. I guess

I'll leave him be. Even though he's being petty. And an ass. Did I mention petty already? Like, I can get it done in an instant-"

His phone is suddenly plucked out of his hands.

He turns around to yell at the person who interrupted his call with his daughter, but when he sees that it's Alastor, his shock overrides his indignation. Alastor hangs up the call for him without asking; he passes Lucifer's phone back, and they look at each other in tense silence.

"You didn't leave yet?" Lucifer asks, perplexed.

"Did you forget, sir?" Alastor points towards Lucifer's pocket. "You still have my photo."

"Oh. Right." Lucifer pulls out the folded photograph and inspects Alastor's picture up-close. He's smirking mischievously, and his eyebrows are raised with curiosity. "Here."

He gives it back to Alastor, who lights it on fire with his hands. As they watch the photograph turn into dust, Lucifer can feel his gaze on the side of his face, but he's too self-conscious to return the look.

It's obvious that Alastor had heard his entire conversation.

"Why didn't you tell Charlie that I'm off to fight the Vees?" He suddenly asks.

"Well, that's your business. Like you said." Lucifer grumbles. "I mean, I don't like your attitude. But y'know. I can respect your wishes."

"How diplomatic of you." Alastor smiles insincerely, but he does stand a bit closer to Lucifer. The fire licks up the photograph in its entirety, singes it all to soot, and Alastor opens his mouth to speak again.

"So you say you can get my pictures back in an instant, hmm?"

There's a competitive edge to Alastor's voice.

"Uh, obviously." Lucifer replies immediately.

"Care to make a wager, then?"

Lucifer finally makes eye contact with Alastor, and he looks like himself again, his red eyes sparkling with a devilish glint. "Depends. What are the terms?" Lucifer asks, getting up from the ground.

"Come with me to the V Tower. I will fight, and you will look for the photographs. If I beat them before you're done, then I win! And if you find all the photographs first, then you win." Alastor shrugs at this. "Although I highly doubt you will."

"What happens after *I* win?" Lucifer grins, watching as Alastor squints at him from displeasure.

“Well, after *I* win,” Alastor corrects him, “You’ll do as I say. You know, you never did eat that venison, did you?”

“GROSS!” Lucifer cries out. “Then you better prepare to do what I want, then, because you’re in *my house.”*

“Oh, what a thrilling offer! But so unnecessary. I’ll prepare the finest raw venison for you, sir.”

“Why don’t you save your energy and just rest? You’re gonna need it after you get your ass whooped today.”

“HA! No need to be concerned over me, your majesty. I’d suggest you bring a good knife to cut through the meat. Deer can be quite tough!”

Lucifer summons up a portal and they step through it together, bickering the whole time.

When they reach the V Tower, Lucifer flies up into the sky to survey the building, trying to see if there are any security guards. Once he’s positive that it’s quite empty, he descends back down, tucking his wings away under the watchful eye of Alastor.

“Those wings of yours.” Alastor says unexpectedly. “Did you always have them?”

“Oh, yeah.” Lucifer spreads all six of them out again. The white and red feathers glow under the soft light, and Alastor’s eyes follows their movement as he flutters them this way and that. “I kinda miss how they used to look. It was pure white.”

“Is that so?” Alastor reaches his hand out, but drops his arm right before touching the feathers. “They look rather…”

“Rather what?”

Alastor’s smile looks strained. Instead of finishing his sentence, he snaps his fingers to summon up a shadow minion.

“This little one will lead you around. It’s memorized the layout already!” The shadow creature grins menacingly and starts to cling onto Lucifer’s pants, wrapping its arms around

his leg. “Additionally, it will report your every move. I have some doubt that you can handle this *properly.”*

“Thanks for the vote of confidence.”

“Get the pictures,” are his final soothing words before Alastor disappears. Lucifer rolls his eyes and teleports into a large surveillance room, the area completely covered in hundreds of flat screen television sets.

“Okay, you… thing.” Lucifer addresses the shadow minion, who is still stubbornly clinging onto his leg. “We’re looking for three items - a USB stick, a computer, and the actual photo. Now where do you think we can find those?”

The shadow creature points to the monitors, and then points to itself after.

“Check monitors first, and then you’ll find it?” It nods at this. Lucifer peers at the screens intently, locking in to a couple of points of interest.

A small safe, tucked behind some clothing racks in a pink room.

A couple of computers, locked inside a garishly red room.

And…

He’s having a hard time finding the physical picture when he notices Alastor on one of the monitors, his body transformed into a gargantuan size. The Vees are there as well, dodging and launching attacks at him, and Lucifer peers a little bit closer at Vox.

When Vox lifts his arm up to send electricity down, his shirt rides up a bit, revealing the original photo that’s tucked underneath the waistband of his boxers.

“URGH!” Lucifer recoils at this. “I’m gonna have to grab it from his underwear? Are you serious?”

The shadow creature titters at this, and he’s absolutely certain that it was Alastor laughing, somehow. It jumps off of him and starts running down the hall, and he hurriedly follows after it.

They enter an extremely pink room, and the safe is visible from afar, grey and sleek. Lucifer places one hand on the metal door, crushes it like it were a piece of paper, and swings it open. The bright blue USB stick is in there, along with a pack of condoms, a variety of guns, potion vials, and.. a BDSM rope set?

“Who puts these in a safe?” Lucifer mutters, cracking the USB in half before slipping it into his pocket. After he looks around to determine there are no other safes, Lucifer gestures to the shadow creature. “Where to next?”

The bright red room is easy enough to find, and he nudges the shadow being to point at the right computer. There’s seemingly a million of them, all lined up neatly in a row, and he’s not sure where the image file is located.

“Which one?” He asks, but it merely shrugs. “Okay. I guess I’ll just, uh. Check all of them.”

He looks for the path of least resistance - electrocute them until they become a flaming pile of broken parts - and he does this over and over again until all of the computers are up in flames.

“Time for the worst part now.” He says to the shadow minion, who just giggles at his misfortune. Lucifer scoops it up into his arms, and he teleports into the lobby to get the last picture from the battlefield.

Alastor is still fending off the three Vees by himself, although he's looking slightly worse for the wear. He rotates his radio cane calmly, but he’s panting a bit, and his deer ears are pulled back from fatigue.

And,

(Lucifer’s not sure if he’s imagining this),

Alastor *winces* every now and then, his arm clutching his abdomen unnaturally.

Lucifer drops Alastor's shadow creature from his arms to transform into a squirrel, making sure to dart underneath the rubble. The Vees are completely engrossed in battle, and they follow Alastor as he twists and turns in the air.

He finally locates Vox, and dashes in as close as possible. When Vox raises his arms to attack, Lucifer hones in on Alastor’s picture, peeking out from beneath his underwear, *ugh*.

In a flash, Lucifer scurries up his leg and yanks it out with his teeth.

“What the - a SQUIRREL?” Vox is beyond perplexed, and when Lucifer jumps off to morph into his regular form, Vox gapes up at him. “LUCIFER?! What the hell are you doing here?!”

“Why would you keep his picture under your pants?” Lucifer shakes his head, before flying away to reach Alastor. He's currently engaged in a terrestrial fight with Velvette, so Lucifer tries to get to him-

-but Valentino intercepts, his giant moth wings practically engulfing the two of them.

“Because he’s got a hard-on for him!” Valentino sings. “Now, to what do I owe this honour, your majesty?”

“Just passing by.” Lucifer dives down the instant Valentino lunges forward, and he’s almost there, right about to meet up with Alastor -

“HEY! King fossil!” Velvette ambushes him out of nowhere, and throws a potion at his face. The bright pink liquid splashes all over his eyes, making it impossible to see, and then someone knocks him down to the ground with a startling ferocity.

"OW!”

(Note to self: rubble makes a terrible cushion for a fall.)

Lucifer rubs his eyes; when his vision finally clears, Velvette is standing ominously over him, her smile cocky and sure. She has a potion in one hand, and her cell phone in the other.

“Wait one second. This is a perfect selfie moment.” Velvette has her camera app open, angling her phone so that they're both on the screen. “When else am I going to be able to take a pic with the head bitch in charge?”

As she presses the shutter button, Alastor dives in and grabs Lucifer by his jacket. He pulls him out of there right when her camera flashes, and somehow that hurts even *more* than landing face-first into a mess of broken debris.

“Ow ow ow ow ow!” Lucifer yells, trying to get him to let go of his jacket. “Uh, can you use a little tact here? What kind of person grabs someone by their clothes? You’re gonna rip it!”

“Where are the photos?” Alastor snarls impatiently.

Oh. Right.

“I got ‘em all. You can check with your little shadow thing later.” Lucifer pulls out the broken USB stick from his pocket as proof, and Alastor looks visibly pleased at the sight.

“Good boy.” He says roughly, his grin maniacal with glee.

It stokes a fire inside of Lucifer - a burning feeling he can’t name - but he doesn’t have time to think about it when Alastor pulls him through a portal to escape.

The sky is almost pitch black when they return to the park, and Lucifer is rummaging around to find the bags he hid in the bushes. He’s been at it for a while, and Alastor looks increasingly impatient as time goes by.

“Where *exactly* did you say you put our purchases?” Alastor says, poking at a tree with his radio cane.

“It was right behind… here…” Lucifer crawls behind a berry bush, but when he finally sees the bags, he hastily retreats. “Never mind!”

“Did you or did you not find it?” Alastor leans over him irritably, and together they’re faced with torn up food, broken bottles and ripped plastic packaging, presumably destroyed by foraging woodland creatures.

Alastor’s eye twitches at the sight.

“A revolutionary idea to put it here, sir.”

“Well, if you hadn’t run off like that, we probably would have been home by now!” Lucifer snaps back. He gathers all the items into his arms while Alastor stands there, and he starts to look for a trash can forlornly. “Ugh. There’s no way we can bring this pile of broken crap back to Charlie.”

Alastor just - doesn’t react. He merely watches as Lucifer tosses the broken bags into the garbage can, one after another, and it’s after an uncomfortably long time that he walks towards him.

He turns around at the sound of his footsteps; Alastor’s tall figure is shadowy in the darkness, but his red eyes glow like a beacon by the shore.

“Well, I suppose you’ve won our little wager.” Alastor’s expression is carefully guarded. “What is your royal decree, sir?”

“You… were being serious?” Lucifer had half-expected him to rescind the offer, maybe, after he had won.

“Why, I’m always serious about making deals!”

“Not a deal.”

Alastor rolls his eyes derisively, and he takes a step back. “Potato, po-ta-toh. Let's get this over with. You should feel honoured - *you* are one of the lucky few who has *ever* won a challenge over me.”

And Lucifer…

just doesn’t know what to ask for yet.

“I’ll think about it.” Lucifer side-steps the question. “BUT! In the meantime, what’s your compliment for me today?”

“Haven’t I complimented you enough already?” Alastor leans down and picks up a broken shard from their purchases, flicking it into the wastebasket. “I believe I called you a *good boy.”*

The phrase makes Lucifer feel kind of strange - somewhat like embarrassment, somewhat not - but he shoves the emotion away as much as he can. “That was CONDESCENSION!”

“Why, I meant every word!” Alastor’s cruel laugh echoes in the vast emptiness of the park. “And where is *my* compliment?”

Lucifer glances at him, and pushes his hands onto his face from exhaustion. It's been a long day, and he's too tired to fire back a silly quip.

"It was a nice picture of you."

It's quiet for a moment, and then Alastor taps his shoulder with his radio cane.

"Shall we head back?" Alastor's voice sounds a bit strange.

A bit stilted.

A bit… guarded.

As he follows behind Alastor, Lucifer feels a weird bump in his jacket. When he takes it out, he finds that he's still holding onto the red pen that Alastor lent him during their shopping excursion.

I'll just give it back tomorrow, he thinks.

In the privacy of his own room, Alastor flinches when he takes his shirt off, his wound pulsing painfully across his chest.

"This stupid thing." Alastor growls angrily, watching as the laceration glows gold. It's a long, jagged scar that zig-zags from his chest to his hipbone, an old injury from Adam that he's been ignoring up until now.

The fight with the Vees - *those idiots,* Alastor thinks - was enough of a strain to reopen the lesion, which had never properly healed to begin with. He touches it gingerly and hisses at the contact, feeling the injury prickle underneath his fingers.

"Well!" Alastor grits his teeth. "This doesn't look promising."

Chapter End Notes

They’re both old men who don’t know where to buy these newfangled items. (P.S. I reject that the canon says Alastor has bad breath. In this fic, he’s always minty fresh.)

Fun Facts:
- Vox does have a picture of Alastor in canon, it’s a ripped picture if you wanna look it up!
- Reference to Alastor's coffee set and venison (ch. 3)
- They teleported separately into the alleyway, but they teleported together to the V Tower. Baby steps!

The Best Friend

Chapter Notes

CH. 5 FANART:
- drawn by @nerdynuala

Thank you! Reach out to me on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites + My Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Dad, when did you take this photo with the Vees?"

Charlie positions her phone to show him. Lucifer leans in closer to look, and immediately regrets it when he's face-to-face with the most unflattering picture of him that he has ever seen.

"WHO POSTED THIS?!" Lucifer yells, grabbing Charlie's phone out of her hands. He uses two fingers to zoom in on the photo, making it bigger and bigger and bigger and -

It's him, Velvette and Alastor during the battle at the V Tower, uploaded onto her personal Sinstagram, of all places.

Posted by: Velvette
Caption: TWO FUCKERS ON THEIR WAY BACK TO THE NURSING HOME!
Photograph on Sinstagram

Alastor had just grabbed him by the back of his jacket to escape; while *his* entire body is completely distorted, Lucifer is in mid-blink, and Velvette's face is twisted into a cruel sneer, her middle finger to the camera.

"Looking good, Lucifer." Vaggie tries to cover her laughter with her hand. He doesn't dare scroll through the comments, which grow dangerously by the second.

"Dad, is this what you were doing instead of getting the shopping done? Hanging out with Alastor and the Vees?"

"Hey! It's very clear that we weren't 'hanging out'!" Lucifer angrily mimes air quotes with his hands. "And do you see this?! That man is literally ripping my jacket!"

"You two little freaks couldn't even handle an errand!" Angel Dust howls, plucking the phone out of Lucifer's hands to look at it again.

“Charlie, please let me redeem myself.” Lucifer clasps his hands together. “I’ll get the stuff you need this time! You know what, scratch that - that *bellhop* and I will go get them, okay? I’ll prove to you that we can work together. And STOP LOOKING AT THAT!”

He tries to grab the phone, but Angel Dust holds it above his head playfully, wiping tears out of his eyes as Lucifer jumps to reach for it.

“Okay, dad, but if you two mess up this one, I’m going to have to assign someone to go with you.” Charlie reluctantly hands him a cream order slip, covered in swooping pink calligraphy. “This is for tomorrow. Could you pick up some clothes I ordered at Rosie’s Emporium? It’s in Cannibal Town.”

“I’ve never been, but I’ll be good!” Lucifer says determinedly. “No fighting this time. I swear on… uh. My rubber duck collection. Buh-bye!”

As he teleports away, Lucifer thinks:

This has to go PERFECTLY.

Once her dad is gone, Charlie looks at the picture on Sinstagram again.

“Do they look like friends to you?” She asks, and they all huddle around the phone to inspect it up-close.

“Hard to say, hon.” Vaggie admits. “I mean, it kind of looks like they’re one step away from murdering someone. Or each other.”

Charlie sighs at this. “The thing is, my dad said that Alastor confessed something to him.”

“Charlie, Charlie, Charlie.” Angel Dust's eyes crinkle with mischief. “What is this? A looooooove confession?”

“No, no! It was his words, not mine!” Charlie says frantically. “I just wish there was a way to know if they’re doing well. When I last spoke with my dad, he sounded *so* angry at Alastor.”

“Remember what we talked about, sweetie? Leave it to them.”

“Right. Right!”

Still, Charlie saves the picture to her phone. She'll send it to him later.

DAUGHTER!
> here’s the photo dad!
> attached: image file

Lucifer
> CHARLIE I DID NOT WANT THIS

Lucifer puts the phone down, appalled at how hideous the photo looks.

Like a masochist, he opens up the picture again.

Then puts the phone down.

And then opens it -

“Good morning, sir!” Alastor materializes into his room without a warning. “As it is exactly 5 am, it’s time to rise and shine.”

“HAH!” Lucifer yells gleefully, leaping up to his feet from his chair. “I fucking *knew* you’d come and ambush me, so I’m ready today.”

(He’s been fully dressed for an hour, actually, and he’s tired as hell, but it’s all worth it for the vexed look on Alastor’s face.)

“How boring.” Alastor’s holding his *Oh Deer!* coffee cup again, and Lucifer can smell the aroma of fresh coffee curling around in the air. “I will have to be more unpredictable, then.”

“Speaking of unpredictable - look at this!” Lucifer shoves his phone in front of Alastor’s face, and he looks down at the screen, a bit cross-eyed. “This photo *sucks!”*

Alastor delicately holds the phone to peer at the image.

“You look…”

And then he starts cackling, putting his hand on his radio cane to steady himself.

“So *commanding,* your majesty.”

As Alastor continues to laugh at his expense, Lucifer yanks the phone back, grumbling the whole time. “Okay, you can stop looking at it now. Why are you here, anyway?”

Alastor composes himself, and his face reverts to his usual impassive smile. “We have unfinished business with the wager. What will it be?”

“Oh, yeah.” Lucifer taps his chin, acting as though he were mulling over the answer. “I wonder what you should do. Wash my clothes? Clean my room?”

Alastor narrows his eyes.

“Hmm. Don't *you* dream big.”

Truthfully, Lucifer is able to do anything he wants with the snap of his fingers - but he’s enjoying watching Alastor wait around for his impending demand. He’s still not certain what he’ll ask for, but he’s definitely planning for it to be stupid.

Or fun.

“Oooooh?" Lucifer teases. "Stressed about what you have to do?”

“Ha-ha! Your bright idea was to have me clean your room.” Alastor says dryly. “I’m sure I can handle any of your little requests.”

Before Lucifer can respond, Alastor suddenly drops his coffee cup, his hand gripping tensely on the lapel of his jacket. The coffee splashes a bit onto the carpet, and Lucifer gets rid of the stain with a magical flick of his wrist.

“Uh… you… you good?” Lucifer’s rather alarmed, and he picks up the cup as it rolls towards his feet. In a flash, Alastor straightens up his back, his knuckles turning white as he clutches onto his radio cane.

“Oh, I’m well!” Alastor says with faux-cheer in his voice. “I’m just appalled at how late I am to my meeting, so I will have to make an exit here.”

“Wh - you’re leaving? To where?” Lucifer asks, surprised. He had already promised Charlie that he would get Alastor to go with him to Cannibal Town.

Which makes him feel…

… unsettled.

Why did he assume that Alastor would automatically accompany him?

“Oh, I am simply going out to meet someone.” Alastor's smile looks more forced by the second. “Did you want me to write a report for you?”

“Hey.” Lucifer reaches his hand out, and Alastor backs away immediately. “You sort of look -”

“What.”

Lucifer falters at his tone - drops his hand - leans away to give him space. They’re standing on opposite ends of the room, separated by nothing but the invisible wall that Alastor had constructed, impenetrable and confusing.

“You look kind of sick.” Lucifer admits, and Alastor freezes up at this. “Maybe you should... see someone?”

“Worried again?” Alastor’s calm facade peels away at the edges, and he’s holding his radio cane so tightly that it looks like it’s about to snap in half.

Lucifer *is* worried, but he can’t voice it.

Not when Alastor was so upset the last time he mentioned it.

In lieu of expressing this sentiment, Lucifer sighs and shakes his head impatiently. “Just come back when you’re done. We still have to exchange compliments, right?”

Alastor’s grin stretches at this, but his eyes still look a bit panicked, the red sclera glowing unnaturally against the pallor of his skin. “Naturally. I never back out of a deal.”

"Not a deal."

When Alastor dissipates away, Lucifer is still holding onto his *Oh Deer!* cup, and he sets it down onto his table beside the red pen that Alastor had lent him for the errand. Picking up the order slip that Charlie gave him, Lucifer summons up a golden portal.

“Guess it’s a solo trip to Cannibal Town, then.”

Alastor slinks back to his room to curl up on the floor, trying to calm his shuddering breath. His shadow is spurting frenziedly in all directions, and the golden wound on his chest is pulsating erratically now, threatening to ooze out blood at any moment.

He fumbles around for his roll of medical gauze to wrap up the wound. The tightness suppresses the pain a bit, and he finally regains his composure, standing up on shaky legs.

“I am going to kill those stupid Vees.” Alastor snarls, his claws digging into his table to steady himself. “And Adam again. And anyone who stands in my way-”

Lucifer suddenly flickers through his mind, and he thinks about the other day,

his stubbornness to help,

his large, red and white wings,

his unexpected compliment.

“It was a nice picture of you.” Lucifer had said.

Alastor glances up at the mirror, and his red eyes stare back at him glassily. There’s sweat beading on his brow from exertion, and his sharp yellow teeth are clenched from the pain. There’s nothing particularly agreeable about his appearance - in fact, he just looks…

Weakened.

Alastor snarls at his reflection - “DISGUSTING!” - and he doesn’t want anyone to see him, especially not the King of Hell -

not like this -

In a fit of fury, he throws his fist at the mirror. It smashes into a million pieces, landing on the floor like fragments of ice.

“Rosie will have something for this pesky little wound.”

Alastor pulverizes the mirror shards under his shoe, before he warps away.

Cannibal Town is surprisingly lovely and quaint, filled with vintage architecture and citizens donning old-fashioned garb. Lucifer walks around on the street, trying to figure out where Rosie’s Emporium is located when he spots a familiar figure in the corner of his eye.

Alastor is walking by himself, and without even thinking, Lucifer ducks behind a building.

It's a bit awkward to see him, actually. The conversation from this morning is still fresh in his mind, and he can still see Alastor in his mind:

Distant.

Uneasy.

Pained, even?

Lucifer glances down at his order slip, and holds it close to his chest.

I'll just find the store and leave, he thinks, peeking out from behind the wall.

Except.

Lucifer watches Alastor walk into the only store he needed to get to: **ROSIE'S EMPORIUM.**

"Seriously?" Lucifer mutters, slapping his head from frustration. "Why is he even here? I can't catch a break."

He carefully crawls his way over to the window, trying to see what Alastor is up to. It's fine - once he leaves, Lucifer will just go in to get the order.

But in the meantime, he's forced to be a major Creep™ peeking in through the window, and he desperately hopes that Alastor doesn't notice him.

There's a little bell on the door that chimes when Alastor pushes through, and a tall lady wearing a burgundy dress (presumably Rosie?) lifts her head up at the sound.

"Oh my stars, Alastor!" Rosie cries out. The window display glass isn't particularly sound proof, so Lucifer can hear every word she says. "Where have you been, mister?"

"Hello, Rosie!" Alastor looks genuinely delighted to see her. She pulls him in by his hand, and he pats her shoulder affectionately. "Quite a pleasure to see you!"

"Come to the back! It's more private that way."

Lucifer watches through the window as the two of them disappear behind a curtain, and he's absolutely flabbergasted at the casual intimacy they shared. He slowly peels himself off of the window ledge, and he lies down on the pavement in agony.

"He looks so happy." Lucifer mumbles. It's a stark contrast to this morning, where Alastor had kept a wide distance between them, looking distraught and in a hurry to leave.

Is that Alastor's girlfriend?

He's feeling…

Very…

He can't pinpoint the exact emotion, actually. It's all shaken up inside of him like a nasty cocktail, equal parts nausea, embarrassment, and intrigue.

An unholy trifecta.

Lucifer looks down at the order form, and he *definitely* doesn't want to let Charlie down again, but he also *definitely* doesn't want to see Alastor, either.

I'll give them some privacy and circle back, he thinks. It's rare to see Alastor so comfortable with someone else.

Besides, he didn't tell Lucifer who he was meeting, which indicated that he probably wanted some time alone.

Still.

Lucifer feels a bit dejected walking around by himself, the previous charm of the town vanished into thin air.

"Alastor, you need someone to look at that wound."

Alastor is in the changing room by himself, and he's putting some medicine on his injury, wincing whenever it stings.

"And who do you suggest?" He asks, buttoning his shirt back on. Although the healing salve alleviates some of the pain, it still isn't a miracle elixir, and he can see blood trickling out of his bandages. When he exits the changing room, Rosie is sipping tea at the table, her eyebrows knitted with concern.

"Oh, sweetie. You have to know someone! Maybe Charlie can reach out to a contact in Heaven? Or do you know anyone with angelic power?"

“What helpful, misguided soul can heal such wounds - and not spread the word about it?” Alastor drawls. Lucifer crosses his mind again, which he quickly pushes away.

Admittedly, he’s shown some signs of concern over the past few weeks, and he did wield great angelic power in his hands.

But Alastor doesn’t trust him. (And how could he ever?)

They’re together because of a deal.

They’ll separate once it’s over.

And they don’t owe each other anything beyond that.

“The answer, of course, is no one. I will find a way to fix it myself.” He sits down at the table with Rosie, ignoring the look of disapproval she sends at his direction.

“Alright, darling. But the second I hear that someone has angelic power, I’m going to tell them to check on you." Rosie warns. "I may not give a hoot about Franklin, but I care about you, mister.”

“Oh, Rosie.” Alastor places his chin in his hand. “What would I do without you?”

“Suffer, probably?” They both laugh at this. “Oh! Speaking of, I have a new crop of sinners for you. I can guarantee that they’re fresh!”

Alastor’s deer ears perk up at this initially, but he sighs and shakes his head. “As *enticing* as that sounds, I am currently engaged in a deal, so I can't spare the time.”

“Oh?" Rosie's eyes sparkle at this. "What's it for this time? Money? Fame? Power?”

“Not exactly." Alastor hesitates. "We are simply spending time with each other. Exchanging some compliments. And... oh! We played music together, once.”

Rosie blinks at this.

“Now, just a second, Alastor. Can you repeat that? I mean, what kind of a deal is this?”

“I will admit that it’s a bit unorthodox." Alastor takes a sip from his teacup. "We are supposed to make nice with each other, and then he’ll owe me a little favour. But it will be quite worth the trouble! He is a powerful one to have on my chain.”

“Wow, Alastor!” Rosie pronounces his name with an old-timey lilt, making it sound more like *Alasta!* “I would love to meet this fine gentleman. Introduce us, why don’t you?”

Alastor balks at this. “Hmm. Perhaps.”

It’s quite normal for him to share details about his deals with Rosie, but he’s hesitant on talking about this particular one. Their promise feels… erroneous. Something that he shouldn’t have done, but he can’t take back.

Alastor evades the topic and changes it altogether.

“Regardless, thank you for the salve, Rosie.” Alastor says. As they step out of the backroom together, she places her hand in his and squeezes it reassuringly.

“It’s probably safe to enter now, right?” Lucifer peeks through the shop display to check. This time, Rosie’s holding on - *to his hand, what!* - and before he can stop himself, Lucifer forces the door open.

“HEY!”

Lucifer stomps over,

thud

thud

thud -

and waves his order form around. He can feel an insincere, plastered-on smile forming on his face, and he looks over at Rosie, noting with some bitterness that she’s around the same height as Alastor.

“Charlie asked me to pick up some clothes- oh wow what a surprise to meet you here - ANDWHOISTHIS?” It all comes out in one sentence, fumbling out of his mouth like word vomit.

If Alastor is surprised by his presence, he doesn't show it. Instead, he gestures to Rosie, and she steps around the counter to come closer.

“This is Rosie, sir! She is the proprietor of this shop."

Rosie looks at him carefully, and then her face breaks into a smile.

“Oh my! Isn’t this Lucifer? Mr. Fallen Angel, in the flesh! I saw you on Katie Killjoy’s broadcast. You’re even more handsome in person.”

“Oh! Thank you.” Lucifer feels a bit unnerved by how friendly she is. “I can’t believe you’re with Alastor. You’re so... polite.”

“Aren’t you a riot?” Rosie laughs at this, and she looks at them curiously. “Say, Alastor, when did you become friends with his royal highness?”

“Not friends.” They both say immediately. Lucifer’s not sure how to describe their relationship at the moment. He looks over at Alastor, who smiles back with his usual razor-edged grin.

“We work together?”

“That is incorrect.” Alastor refutes. “I work, and you play.”

“HUH? Well, I build, and you destroy!”

“I plan things, and you burn them up!”

“I -” Lucifer catches sight of Rosie’s amused grin, and he falters. “I’m sorry, Miss, uh, Rosie? I’m actually here to pick something up. Could you get this order for me?”

“Why, of course!” Rosie plucks the order form from his hand. “You two just sit tight.”

When Rosie is out of earshot, Alastor turns around to face him.

“Are you, perhaps, following me?” Alastor asks, watching as Lucifer’s face turns bright red from anger.

“NO! Charlie asked me to go to Cannibal Town. Technically, she asked the both of us. But you said you were busy.”

“I *am* busy. Not everyone has as much free time as you, your majesty.”

“I’m *working.* Which is what you should be doing.”

“Is that so? What a demotion. From the king of hell to an errand boy: a riches-to-rags story!”

“Aren’t you the facility manager?" Lucifer huffs. "What are you even doing here?”

And Alastor…

doesn’t reply to this.

It’s troubling that he doesn’t shoot back a glib remark. Lucifer tilts his head up to look at him, and Alastor clutches tighter onto his radio cane.

“You’re here for Rosie?” Lucifer guesses. “Are you two dating?”

Alastor’s eyes narrow at his question.

“Why do you ask? Are you *interested* in her?”

Lucifer's jaw drops at the insinuation - waves his hands around hastily - panics as Alastor looks increasingly upset the longer he takes to answer.

"NONONONO. ABSOLUTELY NOT." God, since when did it get so stifling in this shop? "I just meant… I mean, she held your hand! And you looked. Okay with it?"

This seems to mollify Alastor a little bit, but he still looks at Lucifer suspiciously.

"Hmm. Well, if you must know, Rosie is my longtime friend. She's absolutely delightful, and smart as a whip. But we would never date in a MILLION years!"

"Why not?" The words tumble out of his mouth before he can rethink it.

And Alastor fixes him with a smug smile.

"Are you *jealous?"*

"HUH?"

Lucifer is at a loss for words.

"You are being awfully observant about something that happened for only a few seconds! If you want to hold hands with a lady, I'm sure there are plenty in the kingdom who chase royalty." Alastor sings. It takes a moment for Lucifer to understand, and he feels mortified when it finally clicks.

"NO! WRONG! Totally wrong idea!"

What he was annoyed about -

What he was *truly* annoyed about -

Was that Alastor - a demon who refuses to participate in simple trust exercises, runs away from conversations, and avoids any kind of physical contact with Lucifer - that *same* demon was perfectly happy being held by his friend.

A friend of many years.

Many,

many,

many,

many…

Lucifer pushes down the inexplicable hurt and scoffs. "Sure, *maybe* it'd be nice to be with someone again. In a romantic way. But I don't have time for that kind of stuff right now, anyway. Unfortunately, I spend every moment with you."

"Do you, now?" Rosie says cheerfully.

Lucifer yelps - *when did she even come back?* - and he’s so embarrassed by their conversation that he takes a giant step away from him. Rosie places the dress down on the counter, her eyes sparkling with amusement.

“Alastor, you two just get lost in your own little world. I was standing here for a while, but you both ignored me.”

“Sorry, sorry!” Lucifer hurriedly scoops up the dress into his arms. “Thank you for all your assistance. I’ll just, um. Head back now.”

“It’s no problem at all, your highness!" Rosie smiles cheerfully. "Before you go - I would *love* to know what you two do in your free time together. How does Alastor spend his time at the hotel?”

“Oh! Well.” Lucifer glances over at Alastor, who’s currently looking at Rosie with annoyance. “We work together, mostly. We do some, errands? Together? And, uh, I guess, we’ve played music together once.”

“REALLY? Care to share some more details?” Rosie’s eyes slide all the way over to Alastor, and there’s a teasing smile on her face.

“You know, there’s really nothing all that exciting to say-”

“Let’s get going, sir.” Alastor cuts in. “I believe Charlie is waiting for your successful return! Don’t want to let her down now, hmm?”

Lucifer watches the next part unfurl in slow motion:

Alastor tries to pick up the other dress on the counter, but he visibly flinches. Digs his hands onto the table to stabilize himself. Leaves long claw marks in his wake, his smile pinched the whole time.

And…

He’s been trying to pretend that he hasn't noticed Alastor’s behaviour throughout the day, all for the sake of his pride. They've been forced to spend time together for a few weeks at this point, and Lucifer can recognize when he's in pain now.

It’s a little too noticeable, a little too alarming to just wait for him to own up to it, and Lucifer finally caves in to his desire to help.

“You’ve been acting weird all day.” Lucifer admits. “What the hell is going on with you?”

Alastor and Rosie respond at the same time.

“He’s hurt!”

“Nothing!”

Alastor groans and fixes Rosie with a glare. “Rosie, dear, please -”

Rosie places her hand on Lucifer's arm, the gentle touch freezing him in place. When he looks at her, her pitch-black eyes somehow reflect limitless concern for her friend.

“Lucifer, as an ex-angel, do you still have your powers?”

“ROSIE.”

Alastor’s voice is harsh and freezing, but she pays him no heed.

“Please, will you help me with something?” Rosie tightens her hold on Lucifer, and it’s starting to hurt his arm. “Alastor’s stubborn as a mule, but he’s in a lot of pain, and only angelic power can heal him.”

“What’s wrong?” Lucifer looks over at Alastor, who is trying to (unsuccessfully) sneak away from the interrogation. “Did you get hurt with the Vees?”

“No. That fight was a joke!” Alastor sighs out in resignation. “This is just a little souvenir from Adam.”

“ADAM?!" Lucifer's jaw drops. "That was *ages* ago!”

“Oh, I am perfectly fine. I tore the wound a bit! Nothing a little power nap can’t heal.” Alastor says dismissively.

“Don’t listen to him.” Rosie stage-whispers. “He’s trying to act tough, but he’ll collapse soon.”

“Okay, come on." Lucifer beckons him over with his hand. "Show me.”

“I don’t like when you two conspire against me!” Alastor suddenly winces at his injury, and the three of them stand off in silence, watching as he pulls out a handkerchief from his pocket to wipe his brow.

“Well, well, well. Do you see this, your majesty? Please - won’t you help out a sinner in need of salvation?”

“Rosie.” Alastor’s smile is mostly teeth. “If you keep pushing -”

“Yes, Alastor? What are you gonna do?” She says sweetly.

It’s… a lot to think about. But Lucifer doesn’t want him to *die,* necessarily, and healing was one of the few residual gifts he retained from Heaven. He could have Alastor back to normal in a heartbeat, cracking sarcastic comments and feasting on more disgusting food.

“Surely you’re not entertaining this notion.” Alastor looks over at Lucifer, his deer ears pulled back with dismay. He carefully observes Alastor - sees the slight haze in his eyes, the way he clenches his jaw from pain - and Lucifer makes his decision.

“Alright. You know what? I won the wager.” He commands, drawing himself up to his full height. “I order you to let me heal you.”

Alastor sucks in a breath.

And exhales.

“If that is what you wish.” His words come out like pulling teeth. “I will meet you at the radio tower."

Alastor’s radio tower is still completely destroyed, and Lucifer pushes away at the rubble, trying to find a flat area for him to lie down on. The colour scheme is overwhelmingly red, as though a physical reflection of Alastor's signature look, and Lucifer points down at the ground for him to rest.

“Where’s the injury?” Lucifer asks. Alastor reclines on the smooth floor with his hands clasped neatly over his torso, looking about as excited as if he were about to enter a coffin.

“The… stomach area.” Alastor says evenly.

“Okay, you’ll have to remove your shirt.”

“I didn’t know you were such a deviant, sir. What would the papers say?”

“God, then DON’T!” Lucifer says heatedly.

And then he shakes his head.

“I still need to hold some part of you to heal you.” Lucifer explains. “What would, uh, work for you?”

Alastor glares at him before extending his hand out, lifting his palm up. Lucifer cautiously places his own hand down, marvelling at the size difference again. He slides his fingers in slowly to intertwine them together, and Alastor’s breath hitches in his throat.

It’s the most intimate thing they’ve ever done.

Alastor's hand starts to get cold and clammy. "What next, sir?" Alastor mumbles, his eyes fogging over. It's a bit worrisome, and Lucifer suppresses the urge to smack his face to keep him awake.

"I'll do the rest. You just lie there."

Healing is a long, arduous process, and Alastor squeezes his hand every now and then, but that's the most he does to show his discomfort. Lucifer sits down beside Alastor, and the silence that surrounds them is agonizingly unpleasant.

But Lucifer's angelic power is warm; reassuring; it bathes the two of them in a golden glow, and eventually Alastor starts to calm down. He grips on to Lucifer's hand with a little more strength, and he's almost a comforting presence as they hold hands.

Alastor speaks first.

"What is wrong with you?"

"ME? What's wrong with *you?"* Lucifer retorts hotly. "Who just ignores an injury?"

"I can't fathom why you are doing this. You even used your command." Alastor looks at him, his eyes calculating. "We are *certainly* not friends. Wouldn't it be easier for you if I just died?"

"Wha - Charlie would be devastated!"

"So it's all for Charlie then?"

Lucifer looks at him, and he comes to a startling realization.

"You're... kind of an idiot."

Alastor bristles at this, and he almost crushes Lucifer's hand in his own.

"No one has ever called me that and lived to tell the tale."

"Do you really think I would do *this,"* Lucifer lifts up Alastor's hand as emphasis, "for anyone? I'm not a saint."

"Aren't you an angel?" Alastor amends.

"Not even that anymore, either."

At the core of it all, it's hard for Lucifer to act like he doesn't care. He doesn't know him very well, obviously - but what he *does* know intrigues him a bit. Makes him want to see what else is behind the question mark that is Alastor.

Still, Lucifer doesn't want to elaborate. They lapse back into silence, him sitting, Alastor lying down, and eventually he loosens his grasp on his hand.

“Hey, you should be good now.” Lucifer says softly. “You wanna check your wound? I can turn around.”

“No need. I can feel that it is gone.” Alastor removes his hand, lacing his fingers together on his chest instead, but he doesn’t try to get up.

It looks like there’s something weighing on his mind.

“Your majesty.” Alastor stares up at the ceiling, avoiding all eye contact. “Why did you say that it was a nice picture?”

It takes a moment, but Lucifer realizes that Alastor was talking about the pictures he stole from the V Tower.

“Oh, is it already time for our daily compliment?” Lucifer teases. In the periphery of his vision, he can see Alastor roll his eyes. “I just thought it was a shame that you destroyed that picture. You look kinda happy? Calm? Y'know, it would make for a good wanted poster.”

“I will keep that in mind.” Alastor says dryly.

“And what about you? What nice thing are you going to say about me today?” Lucifer taunts. Alastor turns around to look at him, his eyes clear and focused.

“You’re upset about your wings.” He states.

And then, in a voice that's barely there:

“You shouldn’t be.”

That’s as detailed as Alastor gets.

But...

Lucifer’s still happy to hear it.

In his monitoring room, Vox sees Alastor and Lucifer holding hands on every single one of his screens, and he gasps so loudly that he chokes on air.

“What the *actual fuck* are they doing?!” Vox leans in, watching with barely concealed rage. “Is this… are they friends now, or something?”

He thinks back to the other day, when the two of them stormed the V Tower together. Fighting. Stealing. *Working together.* It’s a bad sign for Alastor to team up with the King of Hell, and Vox contemplates on what to do, drumming his fingers on the table.

“I’m going to have to tear them apart.”

Chapter End Notes

I’ve been dying to write jealousy scenes, more incoming.

Fun Facts:
- Alastor ambushed him in the morning so Lucifer is ready this time (ch. 2)
- Lucifer still has his red pen (ch. 4)

The Game

Chapter Notes

CH. 6 FANART:
- drawn by @radioducky: 1 + 2

Thank you!! Reach out to me on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Okay. What the hell is wrong with me?"

Lucifer poses this question to the rubber duck in his hands. He's been hiding in his room ever since he healed Alastor, and he's one second away from hurling his guts out from panic.

In the aftermath of curing him, Lucifer regrets everything that he's done.

Except for helping him, of course - if he hadn't stepped in, Alastor (definitely) would have died - but what he does regret is how embarrassingly ~~awkward~~

~~weird~~

~~clingy~~

attached to Alastor's side he's been this whole time.

"This fucking, pinky promise, *bullshit* is the worst." Lucifer mutters. He sinks deeper into his pile of rubber ducks, and it's almost comforting for him to sit amongst the toys. "Seriously. Why am I chasing after him? What do I even get out of this? Not FRIENDSHIP, that's for sure!"

Lucifer throws the duck onto the ground out of frustration, watching hatefully as it bounces away.

"Stupid depression." Lucifer lies down onto his ducks, making them squeak from the pressure. "Now I don't even know what a normal social interaction looks like."

The problem with being a shut-in for the past few years is that he hasn't spoken to anyone except Charlie, and even then, they only messaged each other about meetings for Hell. He's not sure if this type of relationship he shared with Alastor was normal in any way.

He looks over at his desk, and Alastor's goddamn *Oh Deer!* cup and red pen is still there, taunting him with their existence. He's been trying to muster up the courage to return them,

but the idea of meeting Alastor one-on-one is making him squeamish.

“Why am I getting so worked up over a stupid sinner?” Lucifer tips his head back to look at the ceiling. “He’s awful! You know what, I’m investing too much of my time and energy into this.”

There’s a knock at his door, and he pops his head up from his pile of rubber ducks.

“WHO IS IT?”

“Dad, it’s me!” Charlie says, her voice muffled. At the sound of his daughter, Lucifer perks up, and he snaps his fingers to swing the door open.

“Char-char!” He says brightly, waving at her from his spot on the floor. “I missed you! Want a rubber duck?”

“Oh, no, thank you!” Charlie’s eyes sweep through his room worriedly, looking at his pristine bed (he hasn’t been sleeping), the ever-growing heap of rubber ducks (creating them soothes him, okay) and finally landing on Alastor’s cup in the corner. “Is that… Alastor’s?”

“What, this ol’ thing?” Lucifer tries to laugh it off. With one snap of his fingers, he teleports the cup underneath his rubber ducks. “ANYWAY, how can I help? Want me to pick something up for you?”

Charlie shakes her head. “No errands today, dad. I’m here because you’ve been in your room for a few… days, now! I was wondering if you’re okay?”

“Right as rain, Charlie, right as rain.” Lucifer nods sagely.

She looks firmly unconvinced, but she smiles at him anyway.

“If that’s the case, would you like to have to dinner with me?”

“You’re inviting me for *dinner?”* Lucifer’s eyes sparkle. “Ab-so-lutely! What are we eating? I can make dessert. You up for a soufflé?”

“That sounds great, dad!” Charlie reaches a hand out for him, and he takes it, getting up onto his feet. “Let’s go then!”

As they make their way to the kitchen, Alastor’s shadow lurks on the wall and follows them downstairs.

“Charlie, I am so happy that we’re finally eating dinner together!” Lucifer’s smile stretches from ear to ear, and he’s mixing up ingredients for his soufflé in a glass mixing bowl.

“Me too, dad!” Charlie says. She’s putting on an apron when she smiles at him sheepishly. “Well, truthfully, um, I do have something to ask of you.”

“Anything.” Lucifer says immediately.

“Did something happen to you?”

“Like what?”

“Like, something with you and… Alastor?”

At the sound of Alastor’s name, Lucifer groans and puts his bowl down on the table. “Ugh. I don’t want to talk about that man.”

“So something DID happen?” Charlie looks alarmed now, and Lucifer pours the batter into ramekins to avoid eye contact with her.

“No, uh - let’s talk about something else. Like the hotel!”

Charlie, mercifully, allows the topic to drop, but not before she fixes him with a concerned look.

“Well, I’m thinking of doing a group activity, actually. I’ll organize something when we’re all free!”

“Oh. A ‘group’ activity? Like, with everyone from the hotel?” An image of Alastor pops into his head, and Lucifer wrinkles his nose at the sight.

“Yeah!” Charlie studies him. “Is that going to be a problem?”

“No, no, no, no." Lucifer says hastily. "Just, you know. Looking forward!”

He puts the soufflé into the oven and sets the kitchen timer to 20 minutes. In the meantime, Charlie sautés some food up on the stove, and they work together in silence for a few minutes before she speaks up again.

“Dad, you know you can tell me anything, right? I don’t want you to feel like you’re all alone here.”

Charlie sounds a little sad, and Lucifer reaches out to offer a reassuring hand.

“Oh, Charlie. I love that you want to help, but um, this is something I need to solve for myself. I think.”

He wants to confide in her, but even he has second thoughts saying something like *Hey, Charlie! I'm feeling weird because I think I've been trying to hang out with Alastor too much. What do you think I should do?*

"Something smells terrible!"

They both whirl around to look at the kitchen entrance, and Alastor's leaning against the doorframe, spinning his radio cane idly. "Ah, as I had suspected - it's because you're cooking, sir."

Before:

Lucifer would retort back with something harsh, and Alastor would add insult to injury by critiquing every aspect of his food.

Now:

He bites his tongue, turns back to the oven, and pulls on some kitchen mitts.

"Looks like it's done, Charlie!" Lucifer says with feigned enthusiasm. "What do you say? Shall we set the table?"

"Oh!" Charlie's eyes dart between Lucifer and Alastor. "Uh - sure!"

When Lucifer turns around after removing the soufflé from the oven, he catches sight of Alastor's eyes widening in surprise.

And then narrowing.

"Ignoring me?" Alastor says, his voice low and threatening.

He doesn't reply, which really enforces the idea that *yes,* Lucifer's ignoring him. He tries to walk around him - gets stopped by Alastor's hand on the wall - and then Lucifer nimbly limbos underneath his arm to get past.

Alastor's smile falters for a second, but it comes back with full animosity. "So be it. Two can play at that game."

He disappears from the room as abruptly as he arrived, skulking away through shadow, and Charlie gapes at the interaction.

"Dad, wha - what's going on?"

"Nothing, Charlie." Lucifer says through gritted teeth. "That's just how he is. Dinner?"

Alastor retreats to the bar, and he's currently nursing a whisky while lamenting to Husk, who looks like he'd rather be anywhere but here.

"Husker," Alastor grips his glass so tightly it threatens to shatter, "he wouldn't stop pestering me before."

"Who?" Husk asks. Alastor brushes off his question.

"And now, he can't even stand to be in the same room as me!" He gestures wildly with his glass, splashing whisky across the bar.

"Excuse me!" Husk wipes down the counter in a huff. "If you wanna bitch to the bartender, you better mind your manners."

Alastor disregards his complaints and finishes up his drink, reflecting on his misfortune. He was loathe to admit it, but without Lucifer, he really would have been exterminated, sent down to the dregs of Hell - and despite its imperfections, the Hotel was a much better place than *that*.

Alastor curls his left hand into a fist, recalling how Lucifer had intertwined his fingers with his. It had left him feeling…

Exposed. Confused.

Content.

Alastor dislikes being held by others. But... it had been a strangely calming sensation.

(The worst side effect of holding hands, however, is that he has the inexplicable urge to do it again.)

"He will exit the room," Alastor sweeps with his hands, "avoid eye contact," he points at his own, burning bright red with anger, "and I believe he thinks he's being *slick* about it!"

"What, is your ego so big that you can't handle if someone doesn't pay attention to you?" Husk mocks, topping up his glass with more whisky. The amber liquid shines prettily under the light, and Alastor stirs it absentmindedly.

"Well, I am the Radio Demon." Alastor's voice lowers into static, his eyes clicking away with dials inside,

tick,

tick,

tick,

tick.

“I am a *bit* of a big deal down here, wouldn’t you say?”

“The fuck? Is this about… Lucifer?” Husk says incredulously. Alastor’s hand freezes on his cup, and then he sends a cold smile at Husk.

“Astute, aren’t you.”

“Well, you must have done some shit, then.”

“Me?” Alastor places his hands on his chest from haughty indignation.

“Yeah, *you.* I don’t know much about that guy, but he doesn’t strike me as unreasonable. Awkward, yeah. But not unreasonable.” Husk points at Alastor with his sharp finger. “Unlike you.”

Alastor mulls over this, contemplating about their interactions over the past couple of weeks.

They fought. A lot.

Over *everything,* really.

But Alastor’s hard-pressed to claim all (or any) ownership over those arguments, so he shrugs at the accusation and brushes it off.

“I don't think so. Why, I’ve been a delight!”

“Uh huh.” Husk deadpans. “I have a hard time believing you.”

“Believe what you will.” Alastor pushes the empty glass towards Husk and gets off of the chair. “I don’t pay you to criticize me.”

“You don’t pay me *at all!”*

“Oh, Husker.” Alastor walks away, shaking his head from exasperation. “I am going to speak to someone else. Your lack of insight is wasting my time.”

“Go get the Princess, then!” Husk growls, waving his fist in the air. “And don’t you ‘Husker’ me, bitch!”

Alastor does, indeed, search for Charlie, and as he navigates throughout the hotel, he stares down at his hand again, flexing it this way and that. He hates the feeling of another on his skin, but he still can’t get over the firm grasp of Lucifer, how his angelic power was warm and inviting - a stark contrast to the searing, cruel attack from Adam.

“Alastor!” Charlie calls out, waving him over into a hotel room. She’s currently standing on a ladder, and Vaggie is accompanying her with an assortment of paint buckets. “Can you come here for a sec? I have something to ask you.”

“What a coincidence!” Alastor trots over. “I also require a little information from you.”

“Really?” Charlie blinks at this. “What’s wrong?”

“Your… father.” Alastor gestures with his hand aimlessly. “Is this normal behaviour for him? Being rude. And a bitch.”

“Alastor!” Vaggie growls, waving a paint bucket at him threateningly. “What the fuck? Is that seriously how you’re gonna address her dad?”

“Vaggie, it’s okay!" Charlie pats Vaggie's head to calm her down. "Um, are you talking about dinner? Because I did sense that you two had a little bit of tension. I mean, more so than usual.”

Alastor lets out a long sigh at this.

“I am referring to the past few days. He hasn’t spoken a single word to me. Not quite what we had promised to do now, is it?”

“Well, he has been stuck in his room for a while. I think he’s going through something.” At this, Charlie looks over at him distrustingly. “Alastor, did you do something?”

“I can assure you that *I* did nothing out of the ordinary!”

“Well, that’s not very reassuring at all.” Charlie climbs down from the ladder and stands in front of him, looking a bit pensive. “Well, if that’s the case…”

Charlie brightens up and looks over at Vaggie, her eyes shining with joy. “Vaggie, I think it’s time to launch my plan?”

“Plan?” At this, Vaggie groans. “Charlie, sweetie, you’re not saying what I think you’re saying.”

“Oh, I absolutely, 100% am.” Charlie turns to Alastor with excitement. “Alastor, please ask the rest of the hotel staff to join us in the lobby! I have an announcement to make.”

Before he can even decline, Charlie runs off, her blonde hair tumbling behind her dramatically.

“Guess what we’re all doing today!” Charlie says cheerfully. She had gathered them all into the lounge, and Lucifer had picked the seat closest to the fireplace, which was starting to make him sweat.

It was definitely *not* because Alastor (maddeningly) chose to stand behind his chair.

“We are going to have a fun excursion together!” Charlie pulls Angel Dust to the front of the room, and he bows with a flourish. “Angel Dust and his best friend, Cherri Bomb, have offered to take us out for a night to remember!”

“Not exactly ‘offered,’ but whatever ya want, princess.” Angel Dust shrugs all of six of his shoulders. “Who knew there would come a day where I would party with the King of Hell and the Radio Demon?”

At this, Lucifer turns around to look at Alastor, and they make eye contact for the first time in ages. He quickly swivels around to avoid looking at him.

“Charlie, I think I should sit this one out -”

“Too good to be with the rest of us?” Alastor smiles coldly.

“- because if I’m there, won’t it be kind of a bummer?” Lucifer continues, acting as though he hadn’t cut him off. “I’m, uh, your dad? Don’t you want to party with your friends?”

“Dad, don't say that!” Charlie urges. “And besides, it’ll be a good bonding experience, for everyone! I don’t think we’ve all done something together. Besides, um, stopping Heaven’s genocide. But this should be more fun!”

“So tonight, we’ll go out…” Angel Dust gestures dramatically with his hands. “IN STYLE! We're gonna hit up my favourite joint - a club called Consent! They have a dress code, so lemme see what you’re all gonna wear first.”

Angel Dust lines them up in a row to appraise them carefully, his mismatched eyes scouring over their outfits. “Charlie, cute. Vaggie, toots, lookin’ beautiful. Husk, perfect.” Angel Dust sends him a wink, and Husk sighs but preens a bit at the compliment. “Niffty, gorgeous. Uh, King, can you take off that hat and the jacket? It’s a bit too obvious that you’re. THE KING, y’know?”

“Oh.” Lucifer shrugs off his coat and hat, placing them both onto the couch. He then rolls up his sleeves, revealing his dark grey arms, and he can feel Alastor’s watchful gaze at the action.

“And Alastor, take ya jacket off too.”

“Ha-HA! No!”

Angel Dust shrugs, already knowing it was a losing battle. “Okay, great, what a hot group! Let’s head out.”

As the rest of them prepare to leave, Lucifer makes a last-ditch effort to stay behind.

“Oh, Charlie, my legs are feeling kind of weak.” Lucifer tries to look as sickly as possible. “I don’t think -”

“I’ll carry you then, dad.” Charlie says determinedly, her arms outstretched. “Don’t worry, I’m stronger than I look!”

The idea of having his daughter drag him into a club makes him feel more nauseated than anything, and he shakes his head rapidly. “Uh, on second thought, I’m feeling just perfect! Let’s go, Charlie!”

True to his word, Alastor ignores Lucifer as they all make their way to the club. He’s standing at the back with Niffty, letting her talk a mile a minute, and Husk pulls Angel Dust to the side discreetly.

“Hey, Angel.” Husk murmurs. “Ya might wanna leave the boss alone tonight. He’s pissed that Lucifer has been ignoring him.”

“What?” Angel Dust swivels around to look at Alastor. He glares back at him, his smile glinting dangerously under the street lamps, and Angel Dust quickly turns forward to look at Lucifer instead. “What’s he so pissy about? I thought he didn’t like him, anyway!”

“He’s a narcissist.” Husk shrugs. “He’s bound to be upset if someone doesn’t bother with him anymore.”

“Jeez, what a piece of work.” Angel Dust murmurs. Lucifer is at the front with Charlie, and they’re discussing some sort of recipe for sweets. “Maybe we should keep an eye on ‘em tonight? So that they don’t ruin the vibe for everyone.”

“I’m going to drink.” Husk says firmly. “I already had to listen to him complain this afternoon.”

“Fine, I’ll do it.” Angel Dust huffs, wrapping an arm around Husk’s shoulder with disgruntlement. “But if I need help, you better come over, ya hear?”

“Of course, kid.” Husk grins at him, and Angel Dust leans into his side, smiling back.

Meeting Cherri Bomb is… a lot. Her strawberry-blonde hair looks neon pink under the lights of the club, and she lets out a scream once she catches sight of Angel Dust, waving them over excitedly.

“Over here, hoes! Angie, bitch, I missed you!”

“Heya, sugar tits!” Angel Dust scoops her into a hug, and gestures at the rest of them. “You already know my crew! We’re here to party!”

“Hell yeah! I got us shots already!” Cherri Bomb motions towards the table, which is lined up with an assortment of brightly coloured drinks, rows of dubious looking food, and tall glass cups stacked in a tower. “Let’s all toast and then tear. Shit. Up!”

Lucifer reaches for the pitcher of water and pours himself a glass, sticking a spiral straw into his drink. Cherri Bomb pauses at this, and she slides into the seat beside him, looking at him curiously.

“You ain’t drinkin’ tonight?” Cherri Bomb asks.

“I’ll… pass.” Lucifer holds up his glass of water. “You kids have fun!”

She shrugs at this. “More for me, then!”

As Cherri Bomb and Angel Dust down some colourful beverages, Charlie immediately pulls Vaggie to the dance floor, and they twirl around happily to the beat of the music. Husk pulls Niffty onto his head in order to watch over her, and he walks over to the bar, rummaging around for a bottle of whisky to drink.

Alastor, meanwhile, had mysteriously disappeared from the site, but Lucifer wasn’t completely shocked - this was clearly not his scene.

“I can’t believe Sir Pentious is dead.” Cherri Bomb bemoans, waving her arms so forcefully that her drink sloshes onto the table. “I never even got to try his two dicks!”

“Aw, Cherri.” Angel Dust pats her back sympathetically.

That particular conversation inspires Lucifer to go somewhere else. He settles on standing in a more secluded area of the room, watching protectively as Charlie and Vaggie dance to loud music. He's already resigned himself to bodyguard duty for his daughter (who knows what awful people might talk to them?) when Lucifer is approached by a stranger.

He can't quite make out what he looks like - the neon lights dance across their faces in a dizzying manner - but he's about a head taller than Lucifer, with (potentially) nice eyes.

“You’re really cute.” The stranger's lips are practically on his ear at this proximity. Lucifer is a little uncomfortable by the close distance, so he tilts his head away.

“Oh - thanks!” Lucifer smiles politely. “I like your… uh… earrings.”

“Sweet *and* handsome? You’re the complete package.” The stranger's hand reaches out to grab Lucifer’s shoulders. “Wait! Aren’t you Lucifer?”

“Yep! The one and only.” He jerks away to dodge his touch.

“Are you here by yourself? You wanna get outta here?”

Before Lucifer can reply a simple *no, thank you,* a large shadow looms over them.

Lucifer looks up, up, up - and he’s startled to see that it’s Alastor who had walked over. Although the other person is tall, Alastor makes him look tiny in comparison, and he towers over all of them in an intimidating fashion.

“He is with *me.”* Alastor says icily. The temperature in the club lowers by several degrees, and the stranger gulps at this, immediately dropping his arms to his side and taking a step back.

To emphasize his point, Alastor places his hand carefully on Lucifer’s shoulder.

It's barely a touch. So gentle that he can scarcely even feel it.

But it’s still the first time they’ve had physical contact since Lucifer healed him, and it makes him feel rooted to the ground, unable to move away.

“S-sorry, dude!” He says nervously. A flicker of recognition passes by his eyes, and he suddenly does a double take. “Wait a secon- aren’t you the radio demon?”

“Indeed.” Alastor bares his teeth even more, and it flashes gold under the pulsing light. “And you know what I do with souls, don’t you?”

“I didn’t know he was taken, man. I’ll go!”

“He is just with our party!” Alastor calls out, but the stranger had already scurried away.

Once he’s out of eyesight, Alastor’s anger visibly seeps away. He promptly lets go of Lucifer, dipping his head down so that he can talk into his ear.

“What were you two doing?”

His voice sounds oddly taut.

“He asked me to go home with him.” Lucifer laughs. “Seems I still have the ol’ charm, after all!”

“Did you want to?” Alastor grounds out of his teeth. He sounds…

Accusatory, actually.

“What? No! Which I was *about* to say, before you came up here.” Lucifer looks at him. “Did you need something?”

Alastor doesn’t say anything for a moment. They stand there side-by-side, watching as Cherri Bomb rips through another line of shots while Angel Dust orders some more. It’s awkward to spend time with him after they’ve barely spoken any words to each other, and Lucifer really wants to leave.

As if reading his mind, Alastor says:

“Well. This doesn’t seem like your idea of fun.”

“I mean, right back at you?” Lucifer says, gesturing at him with his cup. “But the water! Wow. They know how to make a good cup of water, lemme tell you.”

“Let’s leave, shall we?” Alastor ignores his little joke and motions his head towards the door. “I have a game that we can play.”

“A game?" Lucifer furrows his eyebrows. "Doing what?”

“So many questions.” Alastor says dismissively. Lucifer sighs at the non-answer, and his eyes sweep over the room, trying to locate Charlie.

“Alright, well, I don't want to leave Charlie here. What if some violent psychopath tries to kidnap her?"

At this, Alastor snaps his fingers, and Husk is forcefully summoned to their side, his one paw clutching a whisky bottle, the other holding on to Niffty.

"What the hell was that for?!" Husk growls, shaking his bottle at them in vexation. "I was literally across the room!"

"Husker, watch over the princess for us, would you?" Alastor gestures at Charlie with his radio cane, and he turns to look at Lucifer. "Problem solved!"

It’s pretty clear that Alastor wasn't going to take no for an answer, but Lucifer still has the impulse to be as contrary as possible. As he stares up at Alastor, he can sense Husk in the periphery of his vision trying to walk away.

"What's your goal here?”

"Why do you ask?" Alastor tilts his head. "Are you *afraid* of being alone with me?”

“I’m not afraid of you.” Lucifer scowls, and Alastor laughs out loud, his radio filter slipping off.

"You really aren’t.” Alastor gazes down at him, his eyes dark red under the club lights, lustrous and terrifying.

“We should remedy that.”

In the back, Angel Dust’s jaw drops after seeing the whole incident unfurl. He makes eye contact with Husk across the room, and he gestures wildly at Alastor and Lucifer as they exit the club.

“WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT?!” He shouts, cupping his hands around his mouth.

“What was what?” Cherri Bomb lifts her head up, still in the middle of pounding down shots.

“Uh… never mind then.” Angel Dust says hastily, settling back down onto the couch. Husk nods at him, and he waves to indicate they’ll talk after. “I’m gonna sleuth around later.”

As they trudge further and further into a secluded part of town, Lucifer is starting to regret blindly following him.

Again! Why do I keep doing this? Lucifer walks a bit faster, trying to keep up with Alastor's pace. When they reach a dimly lit alleyway, Alastor turns around, his shadow stretching ominously under the pale light.

"You're not secretly bringing me here to murder me, right?" Lucifer asks.

"Oh, you." Alastor chuckles at his question. "Nothing that uncouth. I am just suggesting that we should spar!"

"So you *do* want to murder me."

"It's just a game, sir." Alastor motions towards his red and black neck tie, and then points at Lucifer's black one. "The objective is to seize the other's bow tie! Whoever gets it first will be the victor. What do you say?"

Lucifer looks at him cautiously, unsure of what Alastor was planning. His usual telltale signs are deceptively neutral - Alastor's face is impassive, and his ears aren't moving at all. "Well, I mean... what are the stakes?"

"The winner gets to ask the loser a question."

"Huh? *Why?"*

Alastor smirks at his reaction. "Are you worried about something?"

"NO!"

This was a lie. Lucifer does, in fact, have things he's worried about.

"And how are *you* okay if I ask you anything?" Lucifer retorts. "Like, say, how did you die? Why are you in Hell? Or even, what's your end goal for the hotel?"

"Sounds like you have a lot of questions." Alastor's tentacles spurt out from his back, and his eyes glow in the darkness. "Why don't you fight and then ask?"

"Fine." He growls, eyes narrowing with concentration. "It's been a long time coming, anyway!"

Alastor rips off his own overcoat.

Lucifer spreads out all six of his wings.

And they sprint, clashing into each other with a whirl of sharp claws and snarling teeth.

Alastor’s strong, undoubtedly, but Lucifer isn’t that concerned. As they continue to strike - dodging and twisting to avoid permanently maiming each other - he finds himself loosening up, his limbs free and wings outstretched to swoop.

It’s fun -

really fun, actually -

Lucifer’s always loved fighting, and apparently, so does Alastor, based on the unhinged grin on his face.

“We should have done this ages ago!” The words roll out unbidden from Lucifer’s mouth, and he lets out a real laugh, exhilarated at the opportunity to stretch out his muscles. Alastor shoots out his hand, a hair’s breadth away from yanking his bow tie off, but Lucifer plummets from the air at the last second.

“Did you forget? I suggested this on the very first day.” Alastor’s eyes appraise him carefully, and suddenly, a wicked grin spreads across his face.

He sprints forward, and Lucifer crouches, expecting Alastor to try and grab his bow tie again.

Instead, he dashes to Lucifer's side,

head turning, leaning in close,

mouth at his ear -

“Hey, Lucifer.”

Alastor’s voice is but a whisper.

Lucifer whips his head around, and the tip of his nose grazes Alastor’s cheek, bright red eyes looking playfully into his own golden ones.

It’s the first time Alastor has ever said his name, and it utterly disarms him.

Without even missing a beat, Alastor pulls on his bow tie, elegantly unravelling it from his neck. Lucifer snaps out of it - reacts from pure instinct at this point - and he rips Alastor’s necktie so hard his shirt button flies off.

They both land on their feet on the ground, panting a little from the exertion, and Alastor dangles Lucifer’s necktie with his fingers.

“Looks like it’s my win, sir.” Alastor says. His shirt is torn open due to Lucifer’s haste, and he can see Alastor’s collarbone and some of his chest.

Which makes him feel a very strange, sudden urge to avert his eyes.

“Well, you know what,” he holds up the tattered remains of Alastor’s bow tie, “I got yours too!”

“I was first. And the rules indicated that to be the winner!”

“You made up those rules!” Lucifer retorts, but he sighs in resignation anyway. “Fine, fine. What’s your question?”

Without even missing a beat, Alastor says:

“What are you up to?”

That was not *at all* what Lucifer expected him to ask.

“Huh?”

“You haven’t been holding up your end of the promise.” Alastor looks disgruntled despite the permanent smile on his face, and Lucifer winces at his tone.

“I know, you’re right.” He laments. “I’m sorry - ”

Alastor forcefully grabs his chin with his hand, his eyes flaring crimson red. “I TOLD YOU, NO APOLOGIES!”

“OKAY!” Lucifer shoves him off, but then -

his hand lands on the expanse of Alastor’s chest, and Lucifer can feel his steady heartbeat underneath his warm skin,

thump

thump

thump -

Alastor looks down at him, wide-eyed, and Lucifer sucks in a breath.

“Oh fuck - I’ll get off, wait -” He yanks his hand back in an instant, but Alastor stares at him, stares and stares and stares and…

“Don’t -” Alastor starts to say, and then.

Stops.

Lucifer drops his hand down, and he’s bewildered and worried and overthinking, *again,* which was the whole reason why he tried to avoid Alastor, anyway.

“What?” He’s admittedly a bit breathless. Alastor's smile looks strained, and he takes a step back, buttoning up the ragged remnants of his shirt.

"Answer the question."

He ends the moment, full-stop.

Lucifer shoves Alastor's bow tie into his pocket to buy some time. He's definitely not keen to explain his past actions, but…

the game has to be played.

“Well.” Lucifer coughs. “I just felt ridiculous.”

Alastor lifts his eyebrow. “About?”

“I’ve been doing waaaay too much for this promise! I’ve been running after you, fighting your battles, healing your wounds! UGH! I mean, I’m not around others much, and I haven’t hung out with someone in years, but even I know that it’s too.” Lucifer wheezes. *“Extra.”*

“Are you…”

Lucifer braces himself for Alastor’s admonishment.

“Self-conscious?”

Lucifer lets out a garbled noise before sitting down on the pavement, his head hung low.

“It’s even worse when you say it like that.” He runs his hands through his hair, and musses it up in exasperation. “I mean, is this normal? Do others do what we do?”

“I wouldn’t know.” Alastor shrugs. “I just eat their souls!”

"Wow, fantastic. Spoken like a true demon.”

Alastor gingerly takes a seat beside him and crosses his long legs. There's quite a large gap between them, but Lucifer can still see him, dimly lit by the flickering streetlamps.

“But what does that matter? Do you care that much about what insipid little sinners do in their spare time? "

"Uh, I don't *love* the way you're phrasing it - "

“If this is what is normal for us," Alastor ignores him, "why don’t you just keep doing it?”

Lucifer looks at him. “Really?”

Alastor looks back. “Yes. Is that all?”

“Well, way to diminish my concerns, asshole.” Lucifer grumbles. “But... yeah.”

His response makes Alastor smile harder for some reason.

“So we are good then?”

“Good how?”

“We can continue on with the deal!”

Lucifer groans at this. *“Not* a deal.”

“I hope you’ve prepared your share of compliments to make up for all these days.” Alastor says, and -

Lucifer hasn’t thought about it at all since he’s been hibernating in his room.

“Oh, crap. I mean... do you have any for me?”

“In the backlog.” Alastor taps his head. “I take my deals very seriously!”

“Wait - like what?”

“HA-HA! I’m not telling you a thing! You were being quite nasty this whole time - ”

“Hey!”

“So I’ll just wait until you’re a *good boy* again, hmm?” Alastor says.

There’s that unexplainable flicker of interest that burns inside of Lucifer again, and he just covers his face with his hands, as though he could stop the feeling by hiding from it. “You drive me up the wall.” Lucifer groans, peeking through his fingers.

“Likewise.” Alastor’s eyes glow, and it’s the only thing he can see in the darkness.

Mimzy steps out of the jazz club after work, and she spies Alastor with his shirt ripped open, standing next to someone who looked awfully similar to the King of Hell.

“Ain’t that Al?” Mimzy murmurs to herself, watching as they meet up with the rest of the hotel staff. Alastor shakes his head while Lucifer conjures up a portal, and they all walk through it together.

“Hmm.” Mimzy smiles mischievously. “Looks like I’ll be visiting him soon for a little help, then.”

Chapter End Notes

THEY’RE FIGHTINGGG (but I make it homoerotic)

Fun Facts:
- He still has his oh deer! cup (Ch. 5)
- He still has Alastor's red pen (Ch. 4)
- callback to the ticking radio dial eyes (Ch. 1)
- they foreshadowed that they'll party together (Ch. 2)
- Alastor brings back the "good boy" comment (Ch. 4)
- Alastor refused to take his jacket off earlier in the chapter, but he removes it when he fights Lucifer alone

The Performance

Chapter Notes

CH. 7 FANART:
- drawn by @jokeofanartist
- drawn by @poing-boing

If you also have fanart, please send it to me!! I'll definitely reblog/like/share it on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites and Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Alastor rummages through the kitchen cabinets, his agitation increasing when he can't seem to locate his *Oh Deer!* cup. As he rifles through the kitchen, Charlie steps in through the doorway, and waves at him.

"Morning, Alastor!"

"Where is my cup?" He says in lieu of a greeting. Charlie sucks in a breath, and looks away skittishly.

"Oh, gee... I'm not sure. What does it look like?"

She sounds wholly unconvincing, and Alastor squints at her suspiciously. "Why, you know what it looks like, my dear. Did someone take it?"

Charlie opens her mouth - thinks better of it - and then dashes away as fast as possible.

"When I find out who did this, I will teach them not to mess with the *radio demon."* Alastor mutters, his deer ears flat on his head. He's angrily putting his coffee set away when he hears a sound at the door,

knock-knock-knock-

- and he tips his head out of the kitchen entrance.

"Who is it?"

"It's me! MIMZY!" Mimzy's familiar voice shrieks through the entryway, and Alastor walks over with some apprehension. She's all smiles when he opens the door, her cerise eyes looking up innocently.

"Alastor, dollface! How you been?" Mimzy squeals. They embrace each other, and Alastor can smell her signature perfume.

“Mimzy, sweetheart, you better not be here to cause problems again.” He smiles, but there isn’t an ounce of humour in his voice.

“No, no, Alastor! This’ll be fun for you!” Mimzy clasps her hands together giddily. “I’m just here with an itty-bitty request.”

“It’s always *something* with you, isn’t it?”

“Oh, sweetie, always such a riot.” Mimzy laughs airily, not taking his words to heart. “We’re just missing some musicians at the jazz club - could you help fill in while I look for a new hire?”

Alastor pauses at this. He *does* enjoy performing, and he’s always been fond of the music at Mimzy’s club, both in life and death.

“For how long?”

“About a week, at night, but I’d be happy to give you something for your time. How’s about some whisky and some dancin’?”

Mimzy does the Charleston in place, kicking her feet energetically, and Alastor cracks a genuine grin at the sight.

“I must say, it has been a while since I did any of that!” Alastor joins Mimzy during her dance, and together they swing around, the sound of their shoes clicking on the tiled floor. “Well, if it’s only for a week, I *suppose* it could be entertaining.”

“I knew I could count on you! And if you know anyone else who can play music, let me know. Like, say, is his royal highness still around? He’d probably bring in quite a crowd!” Mimzy says innocently, but there’s a wicked glint in her eyes.

So Alastor chooses to feign ignorance.

“Who?”

“Oh, YOU KNOW. I saw you two the other night.” Mimzy lowers her voice at this, as though divulging a secret. “Your shirt. Ripped *right off!* What kind of devilish deeds were you up to, hmm?”

Alastor is so dumbstruck by Mimzy’s insinuation that he’s unable to speak for a second.

He doesn’t usually partake in carnal activities, and the idea that someone might have mistaken them as having Public Displays of Affection™ causes a blistering heat beneath his skin,

scorching -

and confusing -

and it's all rather *embarrassing*.

“It's nothing as scandalous as you think.” Alastor says primly. “Just a bit of fun!”

“FUN?” Mimzy fans herself with a gloved hand. “Alastor, you are simply the cat’s meow!”

Alastor chooses not to dignify her innuendo with a response, and pivots the conversation. “Regardless, I am not his talent agent. I don’t know if he has the time to spare.”

“Well, can you at least ask? And you’re on tomorrow at the club, 10 pm sharp!”

Alastor watches her receding figure as she sashays away. When he closes the door, Lucifer is on his mind, *again,* which was something that started to happen more often than not.

He’s still stuck on the memory of their game in the alleyway, Lucifer’s agile movements, his great wings fluttering in the air, ~~the feel of his hand on Alastor’s chest~~

Alastor blinks in confusion.

Where did that thought even come from?

He places his own hand over his sternum, feeling his heart beat.

It doesn’t pulse quite the same as when Lucifer had put his smaller hand on top, his dark grey fingers grazing over Alastor’s exposed chest.

“Hey, King.” Angel Dust waves Lucifer over to the bar. “Can you come over here for a sec?”

“Oh! Sure.” He walks over curiously, and Angel Dust hands him a little wrapped item that’s covered in pink glittery paper.

“Gift for ya.”

“For me?” Lucifer says in awe. “You shouldn’t have!”

He rips off the wrapping, eager to find out what’s underneath, and his disappointment is immeasurable when he realizes:

it’s a printed out version of the selfie Velvette took.

“You *really* shouldn’t have.” Lucifer says flatly.

Angel Dust cackles at this, slapping his hand over his face from mirth.

“It’s cute! I mean, you can cut out Velvette’s head if ya want. But I just thought you’d like to keep it.”

“Uh, why would I want such an ugly photo of myself?” Lucifer looks at it a little longer, and - yep. It's still awful.

“I mean, Alastor’s in it.” Angel Dust studies him carefully when he says this. “Say, what did you two do after the club, anyway?”

“Real subtle, kid.” Husk mutters, fixing up a tall glass of water. He sticks a spiral straw into it and passes it to Lucifer, who accepts the drink gratefully.

“Oh, that bitch?” Lucifer scoffs and takes a big sip of his water. “He took me to an alleyway.”

“An alleyway?” Angel Dust's jaw drops.

“Yeah, and then he tried to pound my ass.”

“POUND?!”

“Yeah, he wanted to fight me, or something.” Lucifer finishes up the water, and pushes it back to Husk. “Thanks for the drink, bartender!”

“What the HELL!” Angel Dust shouts, making Lucifer jump at his reaction. “You need to learn your slang better!”

“Huh? What’d I say?” Lucifer says, confused. Angel Dust sags in his chair, and he looks over at Husk, the two of them communicating silently with their eyes.

“Never mind.” Angel Dust waves him off. “You’re hurtin’ my head. Whiskers, another one.”

“I told you not to call me 'whiskers', jackass.” Husk still mixes up a pink drink in his cocktail shaker, and Lucifer slides off the chair, scrutinizing the picture as he walks back to his room.

It’s still completely unflattering upon closer inspection, and he looks at Alastor’s distorted body in the photo, his face almost unrecognizable save for his ever-present smile. He carefully folds it right where Velvette’s head is, not wanting to look at her.

Although, it *does* remind him of a different image. The one he stole from the V Tower, where Alastor was smiling mischievously, not a glitch in sight. Not for the first time, he regrets giving it to Alastor, who had burned it straight away.

When he makes it back into his room, he walks over to his desk and sets the photo beside Alastor’s pen…

and coffee cup…

and bow tie…

hmm.

He's faced with the realization that he had (inadvertently) constructed an altar dedicated to Alastor.

"Oh, NO no no noooo." Lucifer bites his lip worriedly. *"How* did this happen?!"

His eyes sweep across the incriminating objects, and his hands hover over them nervously, wanting to hide them but also not wanting to ruin their placement. He ends up covering the table with as many rubber ducks as he can find, piling them up haphazardly on top of each other.

Once he's done, the desk looks more like a shrine for ducks, which is something he can live with.

"Your majesty!"

"AGH!" Lucifer whirls around in horror, face to face with the one person he didn't want to see. Alastor stares back at him, his smile resembling one of confusion.

"Did I scare you?" Alastor croons, looking over Lucifer's shoulder. His eyes rake over the heap of rubber ducks in amusement. "Looks like you were quite busy today!"

"Just - I like making ducks!" Lucifer manages to say. "Want one?!" He grabs a stray duck at random and shoves it onto Alastor's hand, where it squeaks obnoxiously in the silence.

Alastor looks like he has no idea what to do with it.

"You are giving this to me."

"Mhm!" Lucifer nods vigorously. "An amazing, magical rubber duck made by yours truly. You're WELCOME!"

Alastor brings it up closer to his face to examine it, and his eyes flick between looking at the duck and at Lucifer.

"Hmm. It looks like you, sir."

"Uh, what?"

Lucifer takes a step closer to examine the duck, noting the little top hat - the black bow tie - the blush marks on its cheeks, and he can admittedly see some resemblance.

"Oh, yeah. Will you look at that. You know, I make so many of these, I run out of ideas on how to design them." Lucifer rummages through his rubber ducks carefully and pulls out some of the weirder looking ones, the ones with multiple eyes, or with different accessories.

He can sense Alastor watching as he lines them up, and he's feeling increasingly awkward the longer he doesn't say anything.

"You can have a different one." Lucifer says hurriedly. He didn't even *mean* to give any to him, but now that he's opened up that Pandora's box, Alastor's silence was making him prattle on uncomfortably.

"No need." Alastor says, slipping the duck into his pocket jacket. "One is enough."

"No, I mean you can pick something else -"

"This one is sufficient!"

Lucifer pauses in organizing his rubber duck assemblage to gaze at Alastor, who looks absorbed in thought.

"So, uh, why are you here?" Lucifer asks carefully. He's still somewhat off-kilter after their fight in the alleyway, and while it was nice that Alastor reassured him (in his own, twisted way) that he shouldn't be self-conscious, it was easier said than done.

Alastor places his hand atop his radio cane, and he looks over at Lucifer, his gaze calculating.

"Mimzy came by today. She owns a jazz club down in Hell! And I'll be performing some songs at her establishment."

"Who?"

"My friend! She's about this tall," Alastor motions with his hand, "and she came in during our song."

"Oh! Right. Mumzy."

"It's *Mimzy."*

Alastor hesitates for one second.

Two seconds.

"She asked if you would like to join." Alastor says slowly.

"To… what?" Lucifer blinks.

"To play an instrument. On stage."

Alastor struggles to get the last sentence out.

"With me."

It's the first time Alastor has asked him to do something that wasn't a fight. Lucifer takes a step closer, and Alastor leans back a bit, but he doesn't move from his spot.

“Do you… uh, want me to?”

“Do *you?”*

“I mean, I guess I’m not doing anything.” Lucifer relents, watching Alastor carefully. “Unless… you’d rather I stay here?”

“Is that what *you* would prefer?”

Lucifer slaps his hand on his forehead in exasperation. “Okay, now I KNOW you’re just messing with me!”

Alastor clutches his cane, laughing all the while. “Why, I think it’d be rather entertaining if we both went, wouldn’t you say? The King of Hell and the Radio Demon, beguiling the masses with song?”

“So you *do* want me there.” Lucifer says, smiling impishly.

“Well now. I wouldn’t go *that* far!”

Still, Alastor’s deer ears flick up with interest.

“Can you handle these?” Alastor asks, passing Lucifer a songbook. They had made their way down to the conference room again; Alastor has his piano beside the radio, whereas Lucifer is standing close by with his fiddle.

“Oh, easy.” Lucifer’s eyes skim over the music score, noting that they were jazz arrangements from the 1920’s again. (Alastor clearly had fond nostalgia for that era.)

“Are you sure you’re not just putting on a brave face?” Alastor taunts.

“Uh, I’m CLEARLY the better musician.”

“I disagree! Last time, you came in a bit slow.”

“Well, *you* missed a few notes when you played!”

“HA! Fuck you.” Alastor gnashes his teeth together at this, and Lucifer’s grin grows after he successfully calls him out. He turns around to open up the piano fallboard, and he glances over at Lucifer, indicating that he would like to start practicing.

They perform together without speaking at all, save for exchanging some mild critique. Lucifer flips through the sheets on the music stand when they change songs, but he picks up the composition quickly, and he’s certain he’s memorized enough to perform adequately.

“Alright, let’s practice tomorrow before we go on stage.” Lucifer puts down his fiddle after the sun starts to set, illuminating the deer and duck motifs in the stained glass. The light washes the room in a honey-dappled glow, mellow and enchanting.

After Alastor closes the lid of the piano, he swivels on the piano bench to face him.

“Of course, your majesty.” He doesn’t make the instrument disappear this time, and it looks at home beside the cherry red radio. When Lucifer sneaks a peek over at him, he’s met with Alastor’s fervent gaze, unblinking and serious. There's a tightness in the atmosphere, something that he can’t quite put a finger on.

“Well, I guess I’ll see you.” Lucifer makes a motion to leave, but Alastor stops him in his tracks, placing his radio cane down by his foot. He spins to look at him questioningly, and Alastor raises three fingers up.

“Did you forget? You’ve been hiding away for three days. Which means. Three! Compliments!”

Lucifer exhales, annoyed, and he can feel the lingering tension dissipate.

“Were you *always* such a hardass?”

“I adhere to the rules of the deal, sir.”

“Not a deal.” Lucifer mutters immediately. “Okay, FINE! Three? We’ll rotate our compliments. You owe me some too.”

“How fun!” Alastor says, leaning in. “Well, royalty first.”

Lucifer racks his brains for something to say that he hasn’t mentioned before. They’ve been doing this for a long time, and Lucifer’s starting to run out of things to compliment that aren’t deeply personal.

“Your height.”

Alastor shrugs. “Obviously.”

“Wha - obviously?!” Lucifer’s eyes bug out at this.

“Don’t forget I know about your little ‘fascination’ with Lilith.” Alastor’s smiles maliciously. “I also enjoy how you are so much shorter in real life!”

“Okay, you’re definitely insulting me - ”

“I can assure you that I am not.” Alastor sounds surprisingly firm. Lucifer pauses at this, and there really isn’t any sort of insincerity he can detect in Alastor’s tone, so he just coughs and moves on.

“Well, I guess, uh, you’re very warm.”

“Oh, am I that personable?”

“I meant LITERALLY!” Lucifer yells. “Like your hand - and your chest -”

He clams up immediately, but the damage is done.

Lucifer has been trying not to think about that particular instance of the fight - where he tore Alastor’s shirt off and then placed his hands on him - and he’s genuinely surprised that Alastor hasn’t tried to exact revenge on him yet.

He was warm, though. Lucifer thinks traitorously.

“Okay, now *you* say something."

“You are soft.” Alastor’s smile broadens. “Especially your hand. And I mean that literally!”

“Oh, fuck you. Don't just repeat what I said.” Lucifer grumbles, knowing that he's fully mocking him at this point. He takes a long time to think about the last compliment, and Alastor sits on the piano bench patiently, waiting for Lucifer to formulate his sentence.

He pulls his hat down to cover his face, absolutely mortified by what he’s about to say.

“You’re… a good listener.”

“A good *listener?”* Alastor sounds incredulous. “Hmm… I don’t think so. Are you just making things up now?”

“Why would I lie about this?” Lucifer’s voice is muffled under his hat. “I mean, you seriously just, when I ramble on and on, about dumb shit, you’re there. Reacting. Listening. *Responding!”*

Lucifer can hear Alastor walk closer, his shoes clicking on the tiles. He feels him grabbing the brim of his hat to lift it up so that they’re face-to-face, and Alastor is unbearably near, his eyes a brilliant vermilion up-close.

“No one has ever said that to me before.” Alastor looks thoroughly amused. “Since you shared something so intimate, I shall share a secret with you too.”

“What?” Lucifer can’t help but be intrigued.

Alastor pulls his hat off his head.

Leans in.

Smiles.

“I enjoy seeing your face when you’re angry. You become so *very* red!”

“Uh, it does NOT!” As if on cue, Lucifer can feel himself heat up from rage, and he tries to cover it by slapping his hands over his face. Alastor cackles maniacally, watching him with thinly-veiled glee in his eyes.

“Like a tomato.”

“I don’t wanna hear that from someone who’s *dressed* like a tomato!”

“Before you offer fashion advice, you should look in a mirror, sir. What a clown!”

“Hey! If you looked up 'clown' in the dictionary, you'd be the definition!”

Alastor growls and yanks Lucifer’s jacket forcefully, bringing him in closer. The contact causes a swooping thrill in Lucifer’s stomach, and he smacks Alastor’s hand away to chase after him, sprinting and throwing verbal jabs during the pursuit.

"Go see your friend and get a new wardrobe!”

“Oh, Rosie? Thank you for your concern. I will *definitely* look for a new coat for you there, ha-ha! A red one, to match your face!”

“You - oh, fuck!” Lucifer trips on one of the stairs and starts flying towards Alastor’s unsuspecting back. He smacks right into him, and the momentum causes them both to roll down the staircase, going downwards

one step,
two
three
four
five
six
seven,

all the way until they land in front of the hotel staff, wild-eyed and disheveled. Belatedly, Lucifer realizes that the impact to the ground didn’t hurt.

“You are heavier than I expected. Can you get off before you crush me to death?”

When Lucifer looks down, he finds that he's currently sitting on Alastor's lower back, his broad shoulders and fluffy hair in plain view. When he turns around, he glares in displeasure at Lucifer.

“Sounds like someone needs to go to the gym.” Lucifer challenges, and Charlie, instead of breaking up the fight, tenderly wipes a tear away from her cheek.

“I never thought I’d say this, but I am SO glad you two are arguing again.”

The next day, Charlie places her ear against the door of the conference room, but she can’t hear anything from outside.

“What do you think they’re doing in there?” Charlie whispers to Vaggie. She wordlessly hands a glass cup to Charlie, who puts it on the wall to try and listen closer.

“What, Alastor and Lucifer?” Vaggie’s eyes shift towards the locked door. “In a locked room. Just the two of them. For *hours.”*

“Yeah!” Charlie’s entire body is pressed against the door at this point. “You don’t think they’ve actually killed each other, do you?”

The door suddenly swings open, and Charlie yelps as she falls down, dropping the cup onto the floor during her tumble.

“Can we help you?” Alastor says pleasantly.

“Oh! Um, Alastor, dad, just checking in!” Charlie hurriedly pulls herself up from the ground. “What are you… everything good?”

“Charlie, my girl!” Lucifer lights up once he sees her, and he waves at her with his golden fiddle. “And Maggie! We’re just playing music.”

“Music?” Charlie blinks at this. “Like… for fun?”

“Mimzy requested for us to perform at her jazz club.” Alastor gestures to his piano at the back. “It’ll be for a few nights.”

“Oh my GOD, dad dad dad dad DAD!” Charlie runs over to Lucifer, and she looks absolutely thrilled at this turn of events. “That’s wonderful! We have to go cheer you on! What time?”

“The first performance is tonight!” Lucifer says. Before Charlie can respond, Vaggie touches her hand to catch her attention.

“Charlie - we’re supposed to see the overlords tonight. Remember? For our, uh, meeting?” Vaggie murmurs, and she hesitates at this.

“You’re right, Vaggie. Thanks for the reminder.” Charlie looks a bit crestfallen, but she recovers quickly and claps her hands together. “Okay, we will ALL come and see you tomorrow! I’ll bring a video camera. How does that sound?”

“If you dare film me, I will make sure you regret *every* second that you get of me on camera.” Alastor warns.

“Okay! I’ll just film you, dad.” She turns to look at him, but she suddenly notices the rest of the room: the apple-and-pinstripe wallpaper; the stained glass windows that depict a deer and family of ducks; the large red radio in the corner. “Wait! You two finished renovating this place? It’s absolutely beautiful!”

“Aw, thanks!” Lucifer puffs up with pride at this. “Nothing I couldn’t handle, of course.”

“I made the necessary adjustments to really, let’s say, *elevate* the taste.” Alastor chimes in, pointing to various areas with his radio cane. “See this? He was really about to hang a simple crystal chandelier, when clearly, this ruby red one is much better.”

“Oh, you just looooove micromanaging.” Lucifer rolls his eyes, and Alastor glowers at him in response.

“Regardless! I love what you two have done with the place.” Charlie says hurriedly, trying to break up their fight. “In fact, this is more like, a music room or something.”

“A music room.” Alastor echoes. He places his finger on his chin and looks around the space, which was currently housing a variety of music stands, instruments and speakers.

“Yeah! It’s certainly not a conference room now. You’ve really made it your own!” Charlie gasps and swivels around. “Are you two friends now-”

“No.” Alastor and Lucifer respond at the same time, snuffing out Charlie’s hopes.

“Oh.” Her shoulders slump a bit, and Vaggie gives her a reassuring squeeze on her arm. “Well, that’s okay! I’m just happy you two are doing something that isn’t fighting, for once.”

“As lovely as it is seeing you, my dear, we’ve really got to work on this last set.” Alastor shoos them away, and Charlie takes a fumbling step out into the hallway.

“Oh! Yes! Don’t want to disturb your practice. Looking forward to it!”

Before Charlie can leave, Alastor places his hand on the door, preventing it from closing completely. “What *are* you talking about with the overlords?” Alastor asks. "Shouldn't I be involved?"

His eyes lock onto hers, and Charlie puts her finger over her lips as a gesture for silence. “Don't worry, Alastor. I’ll tell you once the plans are finalized!”

Charlie shuts the door, and once she and Vaggie are alone in the hall, Charlie pulls her in for a tight hug.

“Eek! Vaggie, it’s working! My plan for them to get along is actually succeeding!”

“That’s great, hon.” Vaggie can’t help but smile at Charlie’s infectious joy. “I always knew that if anyone could do it, it would be you.”

“This is the perfect news to receive right before our meeting.” Charlie reaches her hand out to Vaggie, who accepts it. “Let’s go and prepare now!”

They walk away, hand-in-hand, and Charlie has a spring in her step.

“So, uh, where’s this jazz club, anyway?” Lucifer packs up his fiddle, and he conjures up a portal to leave. “I’ll just meet you there.”

“Oh, it’s nearby.” Alastor says dismissively. “Why don’t you fly around in the sky and look for me again?”

“Asshole.”

“How charming, sir!”

Lucifer shoots him one final scowl before he teleports away.

When Alastor finally leaves the room, he hums the song they’ve been practicing under his breath, and he makes his way down into the lobby to get a drink from Husk.

Tonight’s experience should be… interesting. Alastor thinks, chuckling to himself. They had been practicing the songs for a long time, and even he had to admit that they were sounding pretty cohesive, as though they were a duo who frequently performed together.

When he passes by the television, the screen flickers into life, and he sighs audibly when he hears it.

“You fucking piece of shit!” Vox yells, his face pressed right onto the monitor. “You and that royal motherfucker destroyed our tower!”

“Well, *you* are the one who resorted to blackmail, Vox.” Alastor doesn’t even bother to look over. “I believe we simply handed you your just deserts.”

“Don’t think this is the last you’ve seen of me - of us!” Vox snarls. “I’ve got a plan, and if you don’t start taking me seriously, you’re gonna regret it, bitch!”

“Ooh, I’m shaking.” Alastor places his hand onto the television, and he grins sardonically at him. “Unfortunately, you have lost your signal.”

“Huh? Wha- ALASTOR!”

Alastor electrocutes the television, and the screen fades to black.

“Well!” Alastor stands up straighter, and wipes his hand on his shirt. “That’s that, then.”

He makes his way to the bar, blissfully indifferent to Vox’s budding rage.

“Thanks for coming, boys!” Mimzy ushers them in. They’re standing inside the jazz club; Lucifer looks around, noting the dark decor, the red piano on large stage, and the huge number of patrons chain-smoking at the tables.

“Alastor, sweetie, what gorgeous tunes will you be performin' tonight?” Mimzy sweeps him up into her arms, and Lucifer side-eyes the two of them as Alastor reciprocates the hug with gusto.

“Only the top hits, of course!” He sings, and he looks over at Lucifer. “Mimzy, this is -”

“Lucifer, of course!” She performs a curtsy. “Your highness, such an honour to have you here. What instrument will you be playing?”

“Oh! I’ll be on the fiddle tonight.” Lucifer pulls his gold instrument out. Mimzy whistles at the sight before pushing them both towards the back of the stage.

“Perfect! You two will be on in a few minutes. Go get ready!”

Once Mimzy leaves, Lucifer paces back and forth across the stage, feeling more nervous than he expected. He peeks through the curtain to check on the audience, and he exhales a large

breath to calm down.

“I did not anticipate for you to have stage fright.” Alastor’s voice pierces across the stage. Lucifer scowls at this and pulls the curtain closed.

“What?! Who, me? Nah. No way.”

“They’ll be too drunk to really care.” Alastor lifts up the piano lid and shuffles the music sheets to the right spot. “And besides, I am here.”

Lucifer is oddly touched by Alastor’s statement.

“Yeah?”

“Rest assured that even if you fail, I’ll still perform well, HA-HA!”

Lucifer sighs and slaps his hand on his face from exasperation. “I don’t know what else I expected from you.”

“In-deed!”

The curtain swishes open, and Lucifer’s breath hitches at the sight of other people milling about. It’s been several years since he performed in public, and he’s not quite sure what to expect. Fortunately, the crowd is too wrapped up in their own conversations to notice them at the front.

“Play the song, sir.” Alastor is quiet, but his voice still cuts through the noise from the crowd.

Once Alastor starts pressing his fingers to the piano keys, Lucifer places the fiddle onto his collarbone, and they play the songs they practiced in the room. It’s kind of soothing, actually, performing music for a disinterested crowd, and Lucifer can pretend that they’re still in the music room at the hotel, just the two of them.

The patrons finally leave during the twilight hour, and Lucifer slumps down on a vacant chair after their recital. The jazz club is deserted, and there’s a radio in the background playing an old song, one that he doesn’t recognize.

“Oh god.” Lucifer places his head on the table from fatigue. “That was… long.”

“It certainly was.” Alastor sits down on a chair across from him, and he’s holding a bottle of whiskey in his hands. He unscrews the cap from the bottle, and pours a generous portion into each cup. “Your payment."

"Ugh. It's too bitter." Lucifer gazes at the bottle, the amber liquid twinkling under the dim lights. "I mean, *maybe* if it's on the rocks or something."

Alastor snaps his fingers, immediately conjuring up some ice cubes in one of the glasses. "Does this suit your delicate tastes?"

"Ha-ha, very funny, douchebag." Still, Lucifer reaches over to grab a glass once Alastor finishes filling them up, and their fingers graze each other unintentionally.

Lucifer looks at him, waiting for Alastor to jerk away from the contact, but he doesn’t.

Instead, Alastor unfurls his grip on the glass…

…one finger at a time.

He’s agonizingly slow. Endlessly mystifying. And when Alastor finally pulls back, Lucifer feels a bit frozen under his indecipherable stare.

"T... thanks." He says quietly.

Alastor doesn't deign to respond.

They drink together without speaking, and it should be uncomfortable, but the old radio is playing some jazzy tune, and Alastor’s humming softly under his breath, clearly a fan of the song. He’s never really sat in silence with Alastor before; Lucifer looks at him, *really* looks at him, and his deer ears catch his attention when they twitch subconsciously.

I wonder how they feel like, Lucifer thinks absentmindedly. He starts to reach his hand over -

“Thanks, boys!” Mimzy pops in out of nowhere, and Lucifer yanks his hand back, a bit abashed at his actions. As she sits down with them, Lucifer’s mind starts going a mile a minute.

Was he…

Was he seriously about to pet Alastor’s ears?

Mimzy, thankfully, is none the wiser about it. “You two sounded amazing! Alastor, care for a dance?”

“Why, of course!” Alastor pounds back the glass of whiskey before pulling Mimzy up onto the stage. Their shoes clack merrily on the wood as they execute perfect tap steps to the sound of the radio, *a one, and a two, and a…*

Lucifer watches with interest as Alastor dances on stage, his movements jaunty and precise.

“Your majesty! Would you honour this gal with a dance?” Mimzy extends her hand towards him. Lucifer’s eyes widen; he sips the whiskey to buy some time, the liquid burning his throat as it trickles down.

“Oh! I have no idea how to do any of… that.” Lucifer motions towards Alastor, who is currently in the middle of a complicated tap sequence.

“I’ll show ya!” Mimzy mimes throwing a rope at him and pulling him onto the stage. It’s enough to ease Lucifer’s discomfort, and he unfurls his wings to fly towards her, a bit dizzy from the alcohol.

Which is why he doesn't notice Alastor's eyes following him as he descends onto the platform.

Although Mimzy is tiny, she’s incredibly nimble, and Lucifer has a hard time keeping up. It’s fun, though, and he laughs when he misses a step.

“You see? What'd I tell you?” He sits down on the stage to take a swig from his whiskey. Mimzy goes back to dance with Alastor, and as he spins her in-place, she shouts:

“Well, hey! Alastor can teach you! Right, sweetheart?”

They both freeze at this, and Alastor ceases dancing for a moment. There’s a frisson in the air when they swivel their heads to look at each other, and Lucifer has to rip his eyes away immediately.

“NO no no! Thanks!” He frantically waves his arms to turn her down. “I’m more of an observer than anything. In fact, I’ve been told I got two left feet!”

Except.

He was lying.

Lucifer was a pretty proficient dancer, but there was absolutely no chance that Alastor would care to be in such close quarters with him, *just* to teach him some moves onstage.

“Suit yourself.” She looks like she doesn’t believe him, but she doesn’t push it. The music plays a different song, more upbeat, and she claps excitedly at this. “C’mon, Al, let’s keep going!”

Mimzy and Alastor continue to dance, rotating among different styles - the Jitterbug, the Foxtrot, the Charleston - and Lucifer finishes up his whiskey, wondering if he could maybe learn how to dance those by watching videos online.

“I’ll look it up when I go home.” Lucifer mutters into his drink.

Bathed in the eerie blue light from his monitors, Vox clicks open a folder full of image files:

Alastor and Lucifer, holding hands in his radio tower.

Alastor's hand on his shoulder at the Consent Club.

Lucifer's hand on Alastor's chest in the alleyway.

The two of them, performing music together at a jazz club.

He bites down on his finger in anger, and he scours through the monitors to search for more damning evidence. Although Alastor's figure is distorted, it's still very clear who it is, and Vox's eyes flick from screen to screen to search for him.

Valentino places a hand on the back of his chair, and he leans in close to look at the images.

"What are you even doing? Is this your version of porn?"

"I'm going to make that fucker and his kingly dog wish they had never messed with me." Vox snarls, his eyes glued onto the screens. "Just you wait."

Chapter End Notes

Fun Facts:
- In canon: Alastor hugged Mimzy, and I know they're quite friendly with one another!
- Also, Alastor is supposed to be an excellent dancer.
- The dances I chose are all from the 1920's.
- In ch. 3 Lucifer mentioned he liked how tall Lilith, but he didn't compliment Alastor about it, so I included it this time!
- Charlie knows that Lucifer has the Oh Deer cup (ch. 5)

- The alleyway fight is from ch. 6
- When they fell down the stairs, I formatted the writing so that it actually looked like a staircase!

Your comments make me SOO happy, tell me ALL your thoughts and ideas, I love hearing from you <3

The Wedding Ring

Chapter Notes

CH. 8 FANART:
- comic by: @nemuiemi
- drawn by @dirtgrubber
- drawn by @taschamix

My Tumblr is @morningstarwrites if you'd like to ask/send me anything!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

In the safety of his room, Lucifer watches a video tutorial on how to dance the Charleston.

"This is harder than I expected." He mutters, wiping the sweat off his brow. While the trainers on the screen made it look effortless, he was struggling with… well, everything.

"Put your weight into your left leg, bring your right leg forward, and back, and tap, and tap." The dancer on the screen says, her leg poised perfectly.

"UGH! Whatever." Lucifer groans and flops onto his bed instead. When he drops his phone onto the ground, his wedding ring catches the light, shining directly into his eyes. He lifts his hand up to stare at it.

Again.

What a sad sack of crap I am, Lucifer thinks, putting his hand down. Lilith abandoned Hell seemingly forever ago, but he's still chasing after her shadow, and the ring was a constant reminder of his broken heart.

But what was even worse,

was how she had left *Charlie.*

He turns his head around, and he ends up face-to-face with that goddamn Alastor shrine he had unintentionally erected. He's immediately flooded with awful memories of him - his audacity, his arrogance, his anger - and he scowls at their framed picture.

"Stupid bastard," Lucifer mumbles, raking his eyes over Alastor's possessions, "and his scary eyes and creepy smile and -"

he thinks about holding his hand when Alastor was injured,

the peaceful expression he has when he plays music,

and his unrestrained joy when he's making fun of Lucifer, cackling so hard his radio filter slips away.

"AGH!" He runs his hands through his hair. "FINE! I guess he's not all that bad."

It's something he can only say when he's alone, and not for the first time, Alastor's duplicity confuses him. Sinners should be *bad.* Saints should be *good.* He has no idea where to categorize Alastor, but all he knows is that he's not, *completely,* rotten.

When he gets up from the bed, he finally slips his wedding ring off, and places it in a trinket dish.

DAUGHTER!
> we're here dad!

Lucifer
> HELL YEAH!

Lucifer grins at his phone before pocketing it away, and he waves at Alastor to get his attention.

"Charlie's here at Mamzy's club! And so are the rest of her friends."

"Mimzy." Alastor corrects him again, and he watches as Lucifer adjusts his vest jacket. "I suppose you'll have to step it up a notch. You were struggling to play yesterday!"

"I would have been better if you were on-tempo."

"I should get you a metronome. Clearly you have no idea how to keep time."

"Your chords were a mess!"

"Says the one who had stage-fright!"

"I may have been a *teensy* bit nervous, but I'm COMPLETELY fine now!" Lucifer yells, gesticulating with his fiddle. Alastor opens his mouth to retort, but he tilts his head from confusion instead.

“You look… different.”

“Huh?” Lucifer blinks at this, momentarily disarmed.

“Something’s missing.” Alastor taps his chin in thought. “But I am having difficulty figuring out what it is.”

Before he can respond, the curtain swishes open, and he hurriedly brings his fiddle to his collarbone. Alastor strikes up a lively tune on the piano, and Lucifer follows after it seamlessly, their instruments harmonizing prettily in the atmosphere.

When he looks into the audience, he finds Charlie in the centre with the rest of the hotel staff. She’s recording the performance with a video camera, and she waves at him with a grin on her face.

In the corner of his eye, he suddenly spies Rosie on the left side of the room, her wide-brimmed hat noticeable in the crowd.

“Hey,” Lucifer mutters, trying to get Alastor’s attention, “your cannibal friend is here.”

“Hmm?” Alastor swivels his head, and he visibly brightens when he catches sight of her. “Oh, what an unexpected surprise!”

“Uh huh.” Lucifer walks away, a bit peeved. He’s not sure why his stomach feels tied up in knots - Rosie was perfectly lovely the last time they met - but watching Alastor’s face light up from *seeing her* was making him feel…

He shrugs it off, not wanting to dwell on it, and instead concentrates on nailing the song perfectly.

When they finish their set, the rest of the audience claps politely except for Charlie, who gives them a standing ovation. Her unbridled glee is infectious even from afar, and Lucifer turns to Alastor to tell him where she’s sitting.

The thing is, Alastor is already halfway across the stage.

“Excuse me, sir! I am going to speak with Rosie.”

“What about -” Lucifer begins to protest, but Alastor exits stage left without waiting for a response, and he settles on watching his back in resentful silence.

“Dad, over here!” Charlie sticks her hand up in the air and waves. Lucifer can’t help but smile when he sees her, and he meanders his way across the empty tables to get to them. They all give him another round of applause when he arrives, and he bows gracefully in response.

“Oh, daddy.” Angel Dust wiggles his eyebrows suggestively. “You are *so* skilled at fingering!”

“Thanks!” Lucifer says sincerely. He completely misses the double entendre, and Angel Dust sighs deeply at this.

“It’s no fun to mess with this guy! I give up. Husk, ya want a drink?”

“Always, kid.”

Angel Dust lets out a whoop of joy, and together they slink off to look for the bar.

“God, dad! You two are, like, AMAZING performers!” Charlie’s eyes are large and sparkling. Niffty starts climbing up Lucifer’s leg, and she looks up at him with fondness.

“Hehehehe. You were so good up there!”

“Oh, thank you!” Lucifer laughs awkwardly, and then elbows Vaggie for help. “Uh, can you remove her from my leg?”

“Sorry, of course. Niffty, stop it!” Vaggie scolds. She manages to yank her off, and Vaggie places Niffty on her shoulders to stop her from squirming around.

“Dad, check out the footage I got.” Charlie passes the large video recorder into his hands, and he flicks through the dials to rewind the video. The film is mostly centred on him, but Alastor is still visible in the corner, looking intimidatingly tall and red as per usual.

Although…

“Hey! He’s not really distorted here?” Lucifer zooms in on the video from surprise. It’s a bit grainy, and the only thing he can see is Alastor’s back, but his silhouette is clearly distinguishable on the screen.

“Who? Alastor?” Charlie leans over his shoulder to look. “Oh yeah! He normally destroys anything with him in it. I guess he let it go this time.”

Lucifer glances over at him from across the room; he’s currently engaged in a conversation with Rosie, with their heads tilted towards each other. He considers showing Alastor the tape to make fun of him, but...

He seems tense, Lucifer thinks. The last thing he wants to do is get in the middle of whatever matter they're discussing, so he turns to Charlie.

“You want to get going?”

Her eyes widen with surprise. “Are we not gonna wait for Alastor?”

“NAH!” Lucifer shrugs, and he conjures up a large portal. “He’s busy, we’re busy. Shall we?”

“Oh! Sure.” She looks at Alastor, and then back at Lucifer worriedly. He’s pretty fluent at deciphering Charlie’s thoughts at this point, and he can clearly recognize that she’s thinking:

Hey, dad, should I step in and help out you and Alastor, or do you want to solve this by yourself, will I be a hindrance should I just leave it alone, but it was my request for you two to get along, and I think you're doing well, but I'm not so sure and I want to ask but I'm too afraid to ask and what if everything is fine and I'm reading too much into it -

And he understood all that just by looking at her face.

"It's nothing personal, Charlie." Lucifer offers her a reassuring smile. "I mean, we're not going to be around each other 24/7, are we? How would that even work?"

"Well... I.... okay, dad." Charlie concedes. They all step together through the portal and return back to the hotel.

At the bar, Angel Dust's jaw drops at this, his six hands carrying different coloured cocktails.

"Did those bitches just leave us?" Angel Dust asks Husk indignantly. Husk takes a long drag on his cigarette, and watches as the portal slowly dissipates.

"Yep."

When Alastor finds Rosie, she immediately claps her hands in appreciation.

"Oh, Alastor, beautiful as always!" Rosie says cheerily. He slides into the seat beside her, carrying a bottle of whiskey in one hand and a glass cup in the other.

"Rosie! I didn't expect to see you here."

"Oh, I overheard from the rumour mill that you were here yesterday, so I figured I could catch you here tonight!" Rosie lowers her voice covertly. "Say, how's your deal going?"

"Oh, fine, just fine!" Alastor takes a sip of whiskey in lieu of elaborating, and he's starting to feel uncomfortable under Rosie's calculating gaze.

"Wow! You should write a novel with all those words." She teases. Alastor looks over at her, and she's sitting there patiently, waiting for him to get his words out.

"Rosie."

“Alastor.”

Alastor feels his smile twitch.

He inhales.

Exhales.

Downs his whiskey.

Pours more into his cup.

And then, finally, he speaks.

“I think I’m unwell.”

“Unwell?” Rosie places her hand on his arm worriedly, all traces of playfulness gone. “Is it the wound, Alastor?”

“Oh, how nice it would be if it were that simple.” Alastor glowers into his cup, his eyes burning with annoyance. “No, it is something much, much deeper inside.”

“Now what has that Lucifer done to you?” Rosie says protectively. “Did he hurt you? Just say the word, Alastor, and I’ll get everyone in Cannibal Town to storm his house!”

“Now, now, Rosie. How can a little thing like him hurt *me?* He’s just unbelievably vexing. Ridiculously argumentative." Alastor pauses, and he places his chin in his hand. "However..."

He looks around the club, trying to find Lucifer. It takes a while, but he finally locates him - he’s chatting with Charlie and the rest of the staff from the hotel - and what’s concerning is that Niffty is climbing Lucifer with reckless abandon.

And she’s crawling up *his leg.*

At the sight of this, Alastor clenches his glass so tightly it cracks into a million pieces in his hand.

“Oh my - Alastor!” Rosie shrieks, dabbing at his hand with her handkerchief. “What’s wrong?! He must have done something terrible for you to react this way!”

Alastor looks down at his hand, and he doesn’t even register the pain. “Well. How do I put this into words? There’s an unnatural, hmm, *connection,* that makes me want to be physically… nearby.”

Rosie pauses at this.

“Alastor, you’re really confusing me. Now, what do you mean by that?”

“I feel… a strange urge… to be around him.” Alastor motions aimlessly with his bloodied hand. “This all happened after I got healed. Thanks to *you,* by the way! So perhaps *you*

should take responsibility for all of this."

"Well, if I'm the reason why you're healed, then you're welcome. And - let me get this right. How did he heal you?"

Alastor can't speak.

"Alastor?" Rosie asks, not unkindly. He lets out a sigh, and wraps his hand up with her handkerchief.

"He.. simply… held my hand! No big deal!" Alastor guffaws, displaying his hands palm-up. "To transfer some of his angelic power. So unless you think that is addictive in some way, I am out of reasons for why this is happening to me."

Rosie's jaw drops at this, and they sit together in silence.

For one beat.

Two beats.

Three…

And Rosie's face splits into the most delighted smile he has ever seen.

"Oh. My. STARS! Alastor, you know what? I think this is good for you!"

"Good *how?"*

"I think that if you want to be closer to Lucifer, then you should. What are you holding back for?"

"Do you even hear yourself, Rosie?" He snaps his fingers to conjure up another bottle of whiskey, and he twists off the cap unhappily.

"I mean, if he's here, performing with you, I'm sure he's open to being…" Rosie pauses here to contemplate her next sentence. "Good friends, at least?"

"Friends?" Alastor spits it out as though the word burned his mouth. "Rosie, he loathes sinners. And besides, what we have here is simply a transactional relationship, which I have been working much too hard on. I will focus on my other business endeavours. Like reviving my radio show!"

"Oh, Alastor." Rosie places a sympathetic hand on his arm. "That sounds wonderful, but are you sure?

"Certainly! He's just a stop along the way. I've got far grander plans than spending time with that one, ha-ha!" He looks askance at Lucifer, who summons a golden portal and disappears through it in an instant.

“Well, if you need anything from me, and I mean any advice, just let me know.” Rosie settles back in her seat, and Alastor tears his eyes off of Lucifer’s retreating figure, completely missing what she had just said.

“Hmm? What was that?”

Rosie stifles a laugh. “Oh, nothing at all.”

For the rest of the week, Alastor bolts the second they finish performing.

He doesn’t stay at the hotel either, and he really only pops in to exchange a quick, shallow compliment. The most Lucifer sees of him is the back of his tattered overcoat, swishing behind him as he morphs into shadow.

“Say, where ARE you these days?” He asked once. Alastor had fixed him with a cold smile, his expression unreadable.

“Nosy, aren’t we?” was Alastor’s terse reply.

And that was that.

Lucifer enters the conference room, planning to practice the fiddle. To his surprise, it's already occupied by Niffty, who is busy tidying up the room.

“Oh! The royal bad boy!” Niffty shrieks, running over. She’s holding a feather duster in one hand and a large, needle-shaped spike in the other, presumably to attack stray bugs in the area.

“Uh, hey!” While Lucifer wasn’t comfortable interacting with most people, Niffty was an absolute wildcard, and he *definitely* didn’t know how to communicate with her. “Didn’t mean to disturb you from your… cleaning?”

“You can never disturb me, sir.” Niffty giggles, waving her spike around energetically.

“Well, um, I’ll leave you to it!” He’s already closing the door when Niffty tinkers with the radio dial, and Alastor’s voice suddenly echoes throughout the room.

“....welcome to my broadcast!” Alastor sounds tinny through the speakers. Lucifer pushes the door back open by a fraction, and he peeks over at the large, red radio. *“I know, I know. It has been a while, but you should know that good things come to those who wait!”*

“Is that… him?” Lucifer asks Niffty, and she pauses fiddling with the dial to look at him. She seems to understand who Lucifer is referring to, and she nods her head vigorously.

“Mhmm! Alastor’s at his radio tower right now. He’s always there when he needs to think.”

“Oh.” Lucifer pushes the door wider. “How do you know?”

“We’re friends, so he told me!”

Lucifer feels his eye twitch from irritation. *Of course* Alastor told Niffty where he went, yet ignored him when he asked.

It’s a constant reminder that the promise they made was just that: a simple agreement to be cordial with one another, but not an expectation for anything beyond. Lucifer doesn’t know why he keeps searching for any deeper implications to Alastor’s actions, and he’s even more annoyed that he can’t seem to stop himself from looking.

“God, he has *so many* friends, doesn’t he.” Lucifer mutters under his breath.

“What’s that?”

“NOTHING!” Lucifer says hastily. “Well, good to know that he’s not dead in a ditch or something.”

“Are you worried, sir?” Niffty scuttles over to stand right in front of him, and he takes a step back at the proximity. “Don’t be! Alastor told me that he’ll be back to normal soon.”

“Normal?” Lucifer echoes. “What does ‘normal’ even look like for him?”

“You know. Like this!” Niffty pulls up the side of her mouth with her index fingers, and forces it into a large, scary smile.

“Uh-huh.” Lucifer balks at this. “Well, thanks.”

He slowly closes the door, but not before checking where the dial was positioned so that he can find Alastor’s channel later.

“And that concludes my broadcast today!” Alastor speaks into the microphone cheerfully. “See you next time, and don’t forget that I’m on air every morning.”

When he clicks off the sound button, Alastor sinks into his chair and looks outside at the barren landscape. He’s been there for a few days now, recording and transmitting his show to the denizens of Hell, but the solitude was starting to feel oppressive. The silence presses in on him from all sides, and Alastor clears out the rubble from his tower just to do something, anything.

And then he hears a *squeak.*

“What’s this?” Alastor pats down his jacket, and he feels something clunky in his pocket. He rummages inside, and when he pulls it out, he finds that he’s holding something yellow.

A rubber duck.

The one that Lucifer had given him.

He had completely forgotten about it, and had clearly carried it around for the past few days without realizing. Alastor brings it up to his face to properly inspect it, admiring once again at the detailed work put in for such a silly little thing.

“You look just like your creator.” He mutters. He still doesn’t know what to do with it, but he finds that he can’t seem to throw it away either. “What exactly is your purpose?”

The duck stares back at him silently.

“You are so very quiet. Unlike that little king.” Alastor finds himself wondering what Lucifer is up to. Making more disgusting breakfast food, perhaps? Trying to help Charlie out, but he’s bumbling around like an idiot?

He laughs derisively at the thought, and he squeezes the duck tightly before shoving it back into his pocket.

I suppose it’s time to deal with him, Alastor thinks. He flips the **ON** button on the broadcast panel, and leans in to the microphone.

“I’ve changed my mind. I’m going to temporarily suspend my show!” Alastor says jauntily. “But I’ll be back before you know it. Stay tuned.”

The truth of the matter is: everything ends eventually.

After Alastor and Lucifer perform on their final night, Mimzy nervously drums her fingers against the dining table, her head swivelling this way and that. Lucifer picks up on it, but he doesn't know her at all (really, in any capacity), so he merely watches as Alastor taps her on the shoulder.

"Mimzy, you seem distracted. What's on your mind?"

"Oh, li'l ol' me? Nothing!" Mimzy laughs it off, but it sounds forced. "Can't a girl just be sad that you two are leaving today? Feel free to stay here and drink to your heart's content!"

Mimzy dashes off, and it's just Lucifer and Alastor standing across from each other.

The club is completely deserted after-hours, and the only source of light is from the burning candles atop every table, flickering warmly in the darkness. The old radio is playing a song that Lucifer recognizes, one that he's performed, actually, and he fully expects Alastor to bid him an insincere good-bye and disappear into thin air. Just like every other night.

Tonight, however, it's a little different.

When Lucifer lifts his arm up to create a portal, Alastor smoothly perches down onto an empty chair, his eyes never leaving Lucifer's face.

He falters for a moment, and his portal spasms into a burst of golden light.

"Uh." Lucifer retracts his arms, and weighs his options. Should he sit down? There's a seat right beside Alastor, and also across from him. Or should he teleport away, and deal with it later?

Before he can talk himself out of it, Lucifer hurriedly grabs the chair next to him and takes a seat. The distance between the chairs is minimal, and he can feel Alastor's warmth radiating out of his side.

"So, HOW ARE YOU?" Lucifer slips unnaturally into small talk, something that the two of them have never engaged in before. "Good weather we're having, huh?"

Alastor doesn't bother responding.

The silence is stifling, and he really regrets not just going back home now. Lucifer ends up tapping his fingers on his knees to do something, and Alastor watches his hands curiously.

"I know what is missing now." Alastor's voice reverberates in the empty club. It's been a while since he's made conversation, and it catches Lucifer off-guard. "You removed your

ring. Why?"

"Oh!" He looks down at his hand, dark grey in colour. "You… noticed that?"

"But of course. You've had that on ever since our first meeting."

Lucifer brings his hand up to the flame, and it looks unfamiliar to him without the gold band circling it.

"I just thought it was about time. I mean, she left a long, loooong time ago. It was more of a, uh, memory, I guess?"

"Sentimental, aren't you, sir? Keeping mementos of your loved ones?" Alastor croons. Lucifer suddenly recalls all the knick-knacks he collected from Alastor, organized neatly on top of his desk, and he hurriedly changes the topic to avoid thinking about it.

"Okay, this is the LAST straw." Lucifer crosses his arms indignantly. "Stop calling me 'sir' or 'your majesty,' alright? Just call me Lucifer. And I know *you know* that's my name, because you've called me that before."

"Oh my, but how can I, a commoner, *dare* to call your majesty by his name?"

"This is what I'm talking about! All those fake, snooty titles you give me makes me sick." Lucifer points at him, annoyed. Alastor leans forward at this, his hands clasping the edge of his chair.

"Does it bother you that much?"

"Uh, yeah."

"Sir."

Lucifer groans and places his hands on his face. "What will it take for you to stop calling me that?"

Alastor smiles wider at this.

"Care to make a deal?"

"NO! GOD! Why is everything a deal with you?!"

"Let's make it a simple exchange." Alastor decides. "If I say your name, then you'll have to say mine. How does that sound?"

It's a lot easier than Lucifer expected. He mulls it over, trying to think if there's a hidden agenda behind it, but he can't seem to find any.

"I guess that's fine."

"Good."

Alastor stalls for a moment.

“Lucifer.”

It’s unexpectedly nice hearing his name come out from Alastor’s mouth, and Lucifer places his chin in his hand, gazing up at him from underneath his hat.

“Yeeees?”

Alastor's eye twitches.

“I’m not sure I like calling you that!”

“Then I order you to. Alright?” Lucifer’s half-joking, half-serious, and Alastor looks at him from the corner of his eye.

“How very authoritative of you, sir.”

“Huh? I didn’t hear you. What did you say?”

Alastor grits his teeth into a pained smile.

“Lucifer.” Alastor mutters uncomfortably. And then he seems to recover, because his voice returns to its usual, unaffected manner. “Well, what is *my* name? Or do you think my name is just ‘you’ or ‘hey’?”

“Uh, I know your name. AAA-LAAA-STORRR.” Lucifer purposefully draws his name out in an exaggerated manner, and Alastor places his hand beside his ear in a cupping motion, as if wanting him to speak up.

“What was that? I didn’t quite catch it!” Alastor smirks mischievously. Lucifer rolls his eyes in response, and he leans in dramatically to speak closer, his lips practically on Alastor’s ear, breath ghosting over him.

“Alastor.”

Alastor whips his head to look at him, causing the tips of their noses to brush against each other, lightning-fast.

Lucifer jolts back from the contact, but his face is still impossibly close, so near that he can see his red pupils dilate. Lucifer knows that he *has* to have crossed a line, shouldn’t have done that, especially with Alastor, who has expressed (many, many times) his intolerance of being touched.

Alastor stares, smile frozen, and Lucifer wishes he hadn’t sat right beside him, because he needs some fucking room to breathe right now.

“Oh, uh - whoops! Didn’t mean to do that!” He bolts up onto his feet to leave, but Alastor’s hand darts out in a flash, and he yanks him roughly back onto his seat. The impact leaves him gasping, and all he can focus on is Alastor’s eyes, glowing crimson in the darkness.

“Where are you going?” His voice is hoarse, uneven. His hand is still clutching onto Lucifer’s jacket sleeve, crumpling it up into tiny little creases.

And he’s not sure when it happened, but there’s something swirling.

In the air.

Thick, and heavy.

And the silence is so deafening he can’t hear his own thoughts, and everything is too hot and he wants to take his coat off but he finds that he can’t move, can’t breathe can’t blink can’t speak -

Alastor’s voice lowers:

“Say it again.”

Lucifer swallows, slow and steady, and Alastor’s eyes follow the motion down the column of his throat.

“A… Alastor.” He can’t help the stutter. There’s a crazed look on Alastor’s face, and he doesn’t recognize it at all, not from any of the times they’ve spent together, but he finds that he’s mesmerized by it. Enjoys looking at it.

Likes being the recipient of it.

“Again.” His voice is barely above a whisper.

“Al -”

“ALASTOR ALASTOR ALASTOR!” The front door slams open, and they both snap their heads to look at Mimzy, who bursts in frantically. “HELP ME! The loan sharks are back - could you help me deal with them?!”

“Mimzzzyyyyyy.” Alastor’s smile is mostly teeth, and his voice resembles static, distorted and irate. He immediately lets go of Lucifer, who is still dazed by the situation. “Is this why you asked us here?”

“Not entirely, but that was a big part of it!” Mimzy bats her eyelashes at them in a cutesy manner. “Won’t you help this adorable maiden out?”

The door gets blasted into smithereens, and Mimzy runs to hide behind Alastor, who starts shifting into his demon form. His tentacles shoot out from his back, and his eyes turn into radio dials, ticking away with anger. Lucifer spreads his wings out and propels himself up into the air, and when he looks down, the entire club is flooded with loan sharks.

“What did you do *this* time?” Alastor’s still on the ground, and he deftly sidesteps the multitude of attacks, his tentacles stabbing as many of the loan sharks as he can.

“Just borrowed some money to keep the club afloat! And, maaaaybe I hit his girlfriend with a car. Again.”

There’s a lot of them, way more than at the hotel, and Lucifer soars around in the air to see which ones he should take out first. This time around, the loan sharks bring aerial reinforcements, and they chase after Lucifer with fervour. He yelps and does a swan dive to dodge the bullets, but more of them hunt after him, and -

“WHY do you have a machine gun?!” Lucifer yells, blocking the hits with one of his wings. The bullets sting a little bit - they're not angelic weapons, thankfully - and he’s getting more and more frustrated by the second.

“I GOT HIM!”

Lucifer turns around when he hears the shouting, and the loan shark kicks, *hard,* right into his abdomen.

“Oh, *fuck -”*

Lucifer feels knocked out of breath, and it’s a little painful, enough that he stops flapping his wings for a moment, and he starts falling, and he knows that he can’t stop the impact so he closes his eyes and wraps his wings around him and his speed gets faster and faster until -

he lands into something firm,

and when he slowly looks up, he stares right into Alastor’s blood-red eyes.

He realizes with a start that Alastor is carrying him, one arm supporting his back, the other under his legs, and it’s a complete role-reversal of the trust exercise they did so many months go. Alastor’s body is so large, and warm, and being in his arms is unexpectedly comfortable -

What? Where did that even come from?

He hurriedly waves away the intrusive thought.

“Did it hurt?” Alastor sings, and he has on the most menacing smile Lucifer has ever seen.

“What?”

“When you fell from heaven?”

Alastor dodges nimbly when Lucifer tries to punch him in the face. He cackles and drops him unceremoniously, and Lucifer lands on the floor with an *oof!*

“You need some more training!” Alastor says mockingly. “You’re getting *sloppy!"*

“Oh, you think you’re SO clever!” Lucifer yells, lunging at him. Alastor continues to snicker, swerving away as Lucifer barrages him with his fists. “Do you know how many times someone has used that line on me?!”

“UH, HELLO?!” Mimzy yells, peeking her head out from behind the bar. “Stop fighting each other! Fight them instead!”

“Right!” Lucifer says hastily, propelling himself upwards again. He launches an arc of gold, knocking out the enemies in one go, and once the coast is clear, Mimzy finally crawls out from behind the bar.

“That was quite the show, boys!” Mimzy claps enthusiastically. Lucifer drops down onto the floor to tuck his wings away, and Alastor fixes Mimzy with an extremely unimpressed expression.

“Mimzy, if you trick me again, I will not help you. I don’t take well to people who abuse my trust.”

“Heartless as always, Alastor.” Mimzy winks at him, clearly not taking his threat seriously. “But I know you’re just talkin’ a big talk here.”

“I am serious. Saving you twice is enough.” Alastor sounds completely humourless. “The next time this happens, I won’t be there. Do you understand?”

They face off in tense silence, and Lucifer starts sweating from nerves, wishing desperately that he wasn’t standing there on the sidelines.

“FINE! Fuck you, Alastor. Who needs you, anyway?” Mimzy flips him off with both her hands, and she struts away testily. Alastor watches her disappear behind the stage curtains before he turns around, spinning his radio cane with practiced composure.

“God. Lotta anger in someone so small.” Lucifer comments. At this, Alastor chuckles a bit, and the tension in his shoulders dissipate.

“She has always been this way. Even when we were alive.” Alastor says softly. Lucifer peeks over at him, trying to decipher his mood, but Alastor has his head tilted downwards, and his red hair is covering his face.

“Well then! Shall we head back, sir?”

Alastor pauses.

Corrects himself.

“Lucifer?”

Lucifer grins at this, watching as Alastor’s eye twitches from discomfort.

“Yeah. Uh.” He hesitates. “Al - ”

Alastor presses his radio cane against Lucifer’s chest, stopping him from finishing his sentence. “Why don’t you keep calling me ‘you’ or ‘hey’ for now.” He says pleasantly, but his eyes look a little frenzied, a little agitated, a little…

Lucifer nods vigorously. “YEP, yep yep yep, that sounds good to me.”

He’s not ready to dissect what happened earlier, and clearly, neither was Alastor, and he’s happy to brush it under the rug for now.*

*(*To be continued,* Lucifer thinks.)

“One final note before we depart.” Alastor taps his radio cane on the ground. “What is your compliment for me?”

Lucifer groans. “Do we really have to do this like, right now?”

“Why, you’re the one who included compliments to our deal in the first place!”

“Not a deal.”

“So what do you say?” Alastor ignores him and presses on. “What flattering remark shall you bestow on me?”

“Well…” Lucifer’s eyes immediately focuses on his fluffy deer ears, watching them twitch upright with rapt attention. “The… the reason why I like your ears. Uh…”

Alastor tilts his head, waiting for him to finish his sentence.

“I can tell what you’re thinking if I look at them.”

“What?” Alastor sounds so startled that his radio filter slips off, and he instantly covers his ears up with his hands.

“Just! How you’re feeling! Y'know, it's nothing serious.” Lucifer doesn’t know why, but he has the strangest urge to console him.

“And they look really soft.”

This part slips out without his permission, and he immediately clamps his mouth shut.

Alastor slowly removes his hands from his ears. “Do they, now?”

“AHEM! Forget that.” Lucifer says hurriedly. “Your turn.”

Alastor ponders for a moment, and then he sniffs the air around him curiously.

“You have a distinctive smell.”

Lucifer physically recoils at this.

“What the HELL? That sounds awful. Ugh!” He hurriedly sniffs his jacket, trying to find the offensive odour. All he can smell is his laundry detergent, with an undercurrent of secondhand smoke from the club. “What is it? Sweat?”

“No.”

Alastor's eyes darken, and Lucifer feels pinned under his gaze. It feels as though an eternity passes before Alastor speaks again, and his voice is quiet.

Uncertain.

"You've always smelled…"

Lucifer waits.

"Like temptation itself."

Alastor turns away.

"Is that how you got Adam and Eve to eat the apple?"

Lucifer's head is spinning when they teleport separately back into the hotel.

What the hell -

Why the hell -

What does he even mean?

None of these questions have answers, and he barely has time to calibrate himself when Charlie grabs his arm.

"Dad!" Charlie pulls him into the lobby, where the rest of the hotel staff are waiting. "I've got a really big announcement to make. Could you sit here and listen?"

"Oh! Yes, of course." Lucifer sits down on the couch, and pointedly avoids eye contact with Alastor, who is on the other side of the room. He shakes his head to clear his mind, and he watches as Charlie runs to the front of the room.

"Okay, so, after extensive meetings with the other overlords, they've agreed to come check out the hotel, and bring some sinners with them!" Charlie says brightly. "What that looks like is that we'll host a grand banquet, otherwise known as a ball, or a party, for everyone!"

"What overlords, exactly?" Angel Dust asks warily.

“As a gesture of goodwill, I’ve asked for all of them to come, but don’t worry, Angel - we are enforcing a strict, no fighting policy here.” Charlie says hurriedly. “And you can feel free to sit out, okay?”

Angel Dust scoffs at this. “Oh, Val can do fuck-all to me outside of the studio. I’m safe, baby! And I get it. This hotel is all about second chances, right?”

“Wait - all the overlords?” Lucifer says slowly. “Like, the Vees?”

He glances over at Alastor, who doesn’t look worried whatsoever.

“Yes! But, like I said, I’ve got everything under control, and I think it’ll a good way to let people know there’s an opportunity to learn about redemption! What do you say? It’s a fun advertisement for the hotel, right?”

Lucifer thinks briefly to Vox, who had just blackmailed Alastor a few weeks ago. No one else seems to express the same concern, however, so he decides to just let it slide.

In hindsight, he should have stopped it from happening before it was too late.

Chapter End Notes

Fun Facts:
- I avoided having them say each other’s names until this chapter! Except for when they fought that time of course.
- Lucifer starts collecting Alastor objects from ch. 4, ch. 5, ch. 7
- Alastor hides from Lucifer, which parallels Lucifer hiding from him (ch. 6)
- Lucifer’s jealousy of Alastor’s friends strikes again (ch. 5)
- The rubber duck is from ch. 7
- Alastor catching Lucifer parallels the trust exercise from ch. 2
- Finishes Lucifer's thought of liking his ears from ch. 2
- Finishes Alastor's thought of his smell from ch. 2

Please write any thoughts or ideas you have in the comments, and I might add them to the fic <3 ALSO I LOVE when you catch my foreshadowing, omfg. Getting your notifications makes my day!!

The Peace Before

Chapter Notes

CH. 9 FANART:
- drawn by @dirtgrubber

You can reach out to me on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites + Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Charlie is enthusiastic on a normal day, but in full party planning mode, she's an utter supernova.

"OKAY! We've got a lot to get through today." Charlie sets down a huge bulletin board in the centre of the room. It's plastered with inspiration pictures, sticky notes, and paint samples, which she gesticulates at wildly.

"As you know, we'll be throwing a *very* fancy ball at the hotel, and I've assigned roles for everyone."

Charlie distributes large binders for everyone, complete with colour-coded tabs and handwritten notes. Husk flips through the seemingly never-ending binder, and he looks put off by the sheer density of it.

"I ain't readin' all that."

"Yeah, Charlie. What is this, like, 100 pages?" Angel Dust drops the binder onto the table.

"200 pages, actually!" Charlie says cheerfully, and her voice starts to pick up in speed.

"It's just an overview of everything that's going to happen, but here's a very quick summary! So, I've arranged for a few big topics that we should focus on. Entertainment, food, decorations, theme, and music. I've left you individual assignments to complete in your binder! And ooh, as the finale for the party, I think it'd be fun if we all did like, a huge musical number at the end! So let's practice for that! And also - "

Vaggie puts a hand on her shoulder, which stops her in her tracks. "Charlie, breathe."

Charlie dutifully inhales,

exhales,

and then smiles at them brightly.

"I know it's a lot to do, but I think if we pull this off, it'll be all worth it!"

Without waiting for a response, she pins up a sparkly banner on the bulletin board, and motions at it energetically. “Presenting, dun-dun-dun-duuuuun, THE THEME! What can be more beautiful and perfect than a masquerade ball? Eh? EH? You may be a sinner, but for one night, you can be someone new - an improved version of you! What do you think?

“And the only acceptable answer is ‘perfect, beautiful, wonderful,’ just so you know.” Vaggie says sternly. “We’ve decided that the dress code will be black tie, which means floor-length gowns, three piece suits, the works.”

“How very charming. Allow me to make some costumes for us. If you recall, I created your little outfits for that… advertisement.” Alastor waves his hand at the television.

“Aw, Alastor! That’s nice of you to offer.” Charlie beams. Vaggie, however, looks at him with mild suspicion.

“Yeah. A little *too* nice. What’s your goal here?”

“Must I always have ulterior motives?” Alastor splays his hand against his chest in mock outrage. “Why, I’m a little offended!”

“I’ll believe it when I see it.” Vaggie grumbles.

Alastor shrugs in response, but Lucifer is less focused on the conversation and more stuck on how during this whole exchange, Alastor had ignored his existence entirely.

They’re sitting at opposite ends of the room. On purpose. Lucifer had slipped to the corner when he saw him; Alastor had swivelled away instantly; everyone else shuffled in to take the space in-between, and now there’s a distance that stretches only a few metres apart but feels like forever.

Which he expected.

And it’s *fine.*

Because.

They’ve been completely off-kilter since the jazz club, haven’t met, heard, spoke to each other - and Lucifer has no idea what he would even say, anyway, besides an incomprehensible string of *hey, why’d you react that way when I said your name? Hey, what does temptation even smell like? HEY, WHY DID YOU CATCH ME IN YOUR ARMS?*

Whatever. He washes his hands of this business, and chooses to concentrate on Charlie instead, who is still running down the checklist for everyone.

“ - so, are we all set to practice our musical finale each night?” Charlie asks.

“Yeah, yeah. Just lettin’ you know, I’m really only familiar with the trumpet.” Angel Dust demonstrates by miming the instrument with his hands. “Where are we gonna meet?”

“There’s a conference room that my dad and Alastor use to practice songs!”

Lucifer looks up when he hears Charlie mention him.

“Uh, yeah!” Lucifer clears his throat. “It’s upstairs. Feel free, of course.”

“Thanks, dad! For today, Niffty, if you could please clean up? Alastor, watch over her?”

“I would be delighted to! Come along, Niffty.” Alastor says, picking her up by the scruff of her neck. “Those floors aren’t going to clean themselves.”

“Right-o!” Niffty salutes him as they walk away together. Lucifer looks down at his binder, suppressing the urge to watch Alastor’s receding back.

Which is why he doesn’t notice Alastor finally glancing at him, quick and barely detectable.

Alastor acts as Niffty’s supervisor while she tidies up, and he helps conjure up whatever cleaning agent she requires. She dusts/sweeps/scrubs with a relish one does not normally associate with cleaning, and she sings at the top of her lungs as they go from room to room.

It’s when she’s wiping down the radio that Niffty gasps, and turns around to him.

“I forgot to ask you, sir! Why did you stop your show? When you were gone, the king and I listened to your broadcast.”

Alastor’s mind doesn’t fully compute the statement.

“Who was listening?”

“The king! Lucifer!”

Alastor blinks at this. *“*Why?”

“He seemed worried about you!”

“Worried?” Alastor’s smile is frozen on his face. It was quickly becoming his least favourite word, and it was something that Lucifer often said to him - much too often, really. “What *exactly* did he say, Niffty?”

“Hmm. He asked where you were. And then he was muttering something about friends, but I couldn’t understand.”

Niffty turns around to continue cleaning, completely obtuse to the shocking news that she had just delivered to him.

“Niffty, my dear, you need to provide me with details.” Alastor tries to pull Niffty off the radio, to no avail. “What else?”

“Why do you want to know so bad? You’re being strange, Alastor.”

And Alastor…

… is at a loss for words.

Why *does* he care so much about the antics of some washed-up king? And so *what* if Lucifer inquired about his absence?

“I should have never met him.” Alastor mutters.

Lucifer was - all consuming. And thinking about him does something to Alastor. Twists up his stomach. Makes him spiral endlessly. And he hates not being in control of his body, his feelings his choices his mind, and he wants freedom from it all. Now.

Perhaps the easiest path for him is to kill Lucifer.

Alastor ponders over the logistics:

~~1. lure him into a dark room~~

~~2. suppress his power somehow~~

~~3. kill him with an angelic weapon?~~

and then decides it would be both too messy and too difficult to pull off. (Unfortunately.) No, Alastor will have to take the more arduous path instead, which involved seeing him. Hearing him. Understanding him.

And maybe once he breaks him apart - piece by piece - Alastor will finally know why he can’t resist the inexplicable pull of Lucifer’s presence.

“What did you say?” Niffty asks.

“Oh, Niffty.” Alastor had forgotten that she was still there. “Just that I’m on a temporary hiatus! I’ll be back on the radio before you know it.”

“Yay!” Niffty cheers, skittering over his legs. “I’ll tell the king when you’re back on again!”

Alastor’s emotions are pulled into all sorts of directions at once.

It goes like this:

Lucifer finally stumbles upon Alastor in the kitchen, where he's drinking from a pot of coffee. He has a matching cup on the side, and Lucifer feels a twinge of guilt when he remembers that he still has Alastor's *Oh Deer!* mug on his mantle.

(He should really return it.)

Alastor looks up when he hears his footsteps. Although his smile looks casually unaffected, he's exuding a sense of…

Unease, really.

Which is ridiculous. Was there anything particularly menacing about Lucifer? And Alastor had mentioned time and time again that he wasn't afraid of anything or anyone, least of all *him.*

But his hands are gripping around his cup - deer ears flattening - eyes watching - and Lucifer doesn't like seeing him like this. Like he's just two seconds away from bolting into the night, never to be encountered again.

Say something good, he thinks, *something calming! Something that leads into a normal conversation -*

"Oh, it's you." is his brilliant opening. He goes to grab a cup of water, regretting everything, but somehow it works. He can practically feel Alastor's agitation lessening, based on how he starts to leisurely sip his coffee.

"The one and only!" Alastor gestures at himself with his free hand. "You'd think you would muster up a little more excitement to see a radio star."

"A *star?*" Lucifer scoffs. "That's an exaggeration. I doubt anyone wants to listen to a has-been like you."

Alastor's smile deepens. "Oh, I have it on good authority that I have at least *two* listeners," he lifts up two fingers mockingly, "AND that you are one of them!"

"WHAT! Where did you even hear that from?!"

“There are no secrets between Niffty and I. We have been friends for ages!”

Ugh. *Friends.* Not that *fucking* word again.

For some reason, Lucifer’s irritation shoots up in leaps and bounds. He leans against the kitchen counter, his hands gripping tightly onto the edge. “I just happened to be there when Niffty was checking out your show, alright? She's the one who told me where you went, so.”

Alastor puts his cup down -

“Why did you want to know?”

Lucifer parries -

“Well, why did you leave at all?”

They both refuse to answer.

Aaaaaaaaand now it’s back to being uncomfortable.

Lucifer runs his hands through his hair, and his eyes flick over to Alastor’s cup. His coffee is pitch-black, with steamy tendrils wafting into the air, and it admittedly smells delicious. Maybe he's been looking at it for too long, because Alastor follows his gaze, and lifts up his cup.

“What’s this now? Did you want some?”

Lucifer jerks back, surprised that he was called out, and Alastor pushes the pot of coffee towards him.

“Well, it’s your lucky day! I’m feeling rather generous. Why don’t you give it a try?”

“NO no no no no… wait.” Lucifer is immediately wary. “Seriously? Is this, uh. Poisoned?”

“HA-HA! What a jokester.” Alastor takes a sip to demonstrate that it’s safe, and then he snaps his fingers knowingly. “Oh, how could I forget. You have a sweet tooth! You were waiting for this, weren't you?”

He conjures up a pot of sugar cubes and a jug of milk, setting it down in front of Lucifer.

“Oh.” This was unexpectedly nice of him. “You… really?”

“Can you sit down before I change my mind?” Alastor looks increasingly peeved, his eye twitching, and Lucifer finally pulls out a chair. They're seated across from each other, and Lucifer slowly reaches over to the pot, double-checking to see if Alastor is about to scream *JUST KIDDING!* or whatever.

When Alastor remains motionless, Lucifer pours himself some coffee, and it almost feels like they’re friends.

Two pals. Palling around. Doing whatever pal activities that pals do because they're pals with each other -

"Hey, are we…" Lucifer wants to know.

Desperately.

Are we friends?

But even he knew that it's not a question people ask. They either are, or aren't.

And real friends wouldn't constantly worry about the validity of their relationship.

"Hmm? Are we what?" Alastor inquires, gaze searching, smile ever-present.

"Are we…" Lucifer clears his throat. "Cool?"

"COOL?" He repeats. The word sounds foreign coming out of his mouth.

"Yeah. COOL WITH. EACH OTHER!" Lucifer wants to backtrack, *thank you very much,* or perhaps have the ground swallow him up. "I mean, at the jazz club - you hated when I said your name, right? Sorry - "

Alastor digs his claws into the tabletop-

"- oh GOD! Sorry for saying sorry-"

his growl reverberates, low-pitched and snarling-

"FUCK! Okay. Just, never mind."

Lucifer wants to whack himself over the head. He hurriedly tosses in some sugar cubes into his coffee instead, and when he drinks it, he finds that it's… well, it's really good, actually. He downs it, about to pour himself a second serving, and then hesitates.

Technically, Alastor only offered him a taste, so.

Lucifer takes his hand back, and as the silence grows like a yawning chasm, he makes a move to leave.

But then -

Alastor settles down and places his chin on his hands, his fingers interwoven with one another.

"We're 'cool'." He says, amused. "Lucifer."

And it really does feel like, maybe, they'll be okay.

Charlie ushers them all into the conference room, and she hands them each a thick stack of music sheets.

“I was thinking we’ll have a schedule for music performances. I know we all play different instruments, so we’ll just rotate who performs every thirty minutes. And at the end, we’ll all perform together!”

Angel Dust doesn’t pay attention. Rather, he looks around the room in confusion, touching the stained glass windows with one of his hands, pointing at Alastor and Lucifer with another.

“Hey, since when did we have this place? And why is it decorated like some kind of weird love child between those two?”

“Why, it is simply a conference room! I had to make some little renovations, after he messed it up.” Alastor points at Lucifer with his radio cane.

“That was all on you! You were making me angry on PURPOSE!” Lucifer retorts.

“Not my fault that you have a short fuse. Although, it’s not as short as your height!”

“Says the one who gets all pissy at the smallest things!”

“No wonder you provoke me so much, then. *You* are the smallest of them all!”

Lucifer is about to snap back at him when he suddenly feels a strange tug on his leg. As he looks down, he finds Niffty climbing her way up until she settles atop his hat.

“I’ll play the triangle!” Niffty says cheerfully, completely oblivious to their arguing. Alastor reaches over and plucks her off immediately, his displeasure apparent within his smile.

“Niffty, why don’t you sit on my head instead. It makes for a *much* more comfortable seat than his ridiculous hat.” Alastor places her on his head, and she whoops with joy. She runs her fingers through his hair, and Alastor flicks his deer ears away when she gets too close.

Still, Lucifer watches resentfully as she buries herself face-first onto his head.

“Okay, everyone! Let’s find our places and go over some of these.” Charlie stands at the front, a conductor's baton in her hands, and at her signal they all begin to play.

They work through the melody a few times, flipping through sheet after sheet. The songs range in style and era, and Lucifer focuses his attention on memorizing as much as possible, not wanting to mess up on the day of. He's playing his fiddle, and they all sound quite harmonious together, despite the varying instruments.

It's only when the sun sets that Charlie proclaims practice to be over, and everyone stretches after having rehearsed for so long.

"Thanks again, all! We'll meet back here in the conference room tomorrow." Charlie looks at the plaque on the wall thoughtfully, which have the words **CONFERENCE ROOM** on it. "Actually, I think we should probably rename it to a music room now, huh?"

"That sounds great, Charlie!" Lucifer smiles and taps the plaque on the wall. The words immediately rearrange to write **MUSIC ROOM,** and the gold sign shines brightly under the warm light.

"Ooh!" Charlie squeals with excitement. "Thanks, dad! This looks perfect!"

"Doesn't it?" Lucifer preens under his daughter's praise, and Alastor walks over to inspect the plaque, his eyes scouring it carefully.

"Oh, you! You really need to have better taste in things."

"Uh, what the hell do you know?"

"More than you, apparently!" Alastor snaps his fingers, and he summons up an etching of a deer on the plaque, flanking the words on the left. Charlie gasps at this, her eyes sparkling, and Lucifer feels a bit wounded.

"CHARLIE! I thought you'd have my back!"

"I'm sorry, dad - it's just so cute!" Charlie looks at it with so much wonder that Lucifer taps on the sign anyway, and out of spite, he engraves a small duck on the right. The animals look quite at home together, actually, and she coos over the imagery.

"You and your ducks." Alastor's voice is… quiet.

Lucifer pays no heed to him and looks at the plaque, admiring his handiwork. But Alastor's eyes are fixed onto his profile, looking at the planes of Lucifer's face, and Angel Dust watches all this unfurl with bewilderment.

“Charlie, what the HELL is going on with your dad and Alastor?” Angel Dust asks vehemently.

“Huh?” Charlie’s neck-deep in paperwork, and the dark circles under her eyes indicate her lack of sleep. “Sorry, I’m just so busy with everything right now. What happened? Are things tense between them?”

“No, they’re like…” Angel Dust can’t even begin to describe it. “I mean, it is TENSE, but in a... different way?”

“Angel.” Charlie focuses her attention back onto her work. “Sorry, I just really have to get this done - ”

“Look, I'm a master at my craft, right? I do this for a living!” Angel Dust gestures wildly with all six of his arms. “I’m tellin’ ya, I think they’re up to something. A little bit of this and a little bit of that, y’know?”

He sprawls across the table suggestively, and Charlie groans at this.

“Oh, get your head out of the gutter, Angel! I’m sure they’re just trying their best.”

Angel Dust picks himself up and grumbles. “Fine, but mark my words, I WILL get to the bottom of this. And I’ll bring ya proof, too!”

It’s the night before the ball, and it’s a cliché - a tale as old as time - but Lucifer has difficulty sleeping.

He sits on his windowsill, debating if he should go for a midnight flight to clear his mind. The sky is a dark pink, lit up by the brilliant glow of the red moon, and he’s always found this to be the his favourite part of Hell. It’s vastly different from the brilliant blue skies of Heaven, but it’s beautiful, too - truly two halves of a whole.

Lucifer hears the crunching of gravel beneath him, and when he looks down, he sees Alastor traipsing about the perimeters, adding the finishing touches on the building before the party. He's using his radio cane to embellish different areas, conjuring up shiny objects and artful décor.

As if feeling his stare, Alastor tilts his head up to look at him.

"Spying on me?" Alastor mocks. "Am I that entertaining?"

"You sure are self-absorbed." Lucifer scoffs. "You're the one walking underneath my window, idiot."

Like a planet orbiting the sun, Lucifer feels the pull to see him.

But he doesn't cave in.

(Not yet.)

"What are you doing?" Lucifer calls out. "Stalking some prey?"

"Just touching up a few things before the event! As the facility manager, my job is never-ending." Alastor waves his radio cane to trim the surrounding topiaries. "And what are *you* doing up? You should catch up on your beauty sleep. You need it!"

"WOW! That's funny. Why don't you look in a mirror first."

"Why, you've already cracked every single one with your reflection!"

Lucifer lets out a haggard sigh and slips back into his room. Although there are some things he wants to ask Alastor about, he's fatigued, worried about tomorrow, and he's still trying to memorize his part in the musical finale, anyway.

But then…

"Lucifer."

He peeks his head out the window, and Alastor is still there, standing perfectly still in the centre of the garden.

"Come down here." Alastor demands more so than asks.

"Why?" Lucifer replies sullenly.

"Well! It's clear that you have something on your mind."

It's unsettling that Alastor noticed this.

"Are you sure you're not telepathic or something?" Lucifer asks cautiously, but he still swoops down to land right in front of him. There's a question on the tip of his tongue,

actually, one that he's been pondering about for a while, and he paces back and forth to summon up the words.

"Can you get to the point?" Alastor squints at him. "I am very busy tonight."

"YOU'RE the one who called me down here!" Lucifer yells. Takes in a deep breath to calm himself down.

And as Alastor twirls his radio cane in his hands, he finally asks:

"Uh. Y'know, the Vees will be here. Sure that's okay?"

Alastor… pauses, and he doesn't seem to fully understand his question.

"Of course! They are merely small fry. And they can't lift a finger against me, anyway."

"But." How does he ask this delicately. "Uh, Vox seemed really, into you. Is he an ex, or something?"

Alastor doesn't respond.

And Lucifer's heart stops for a moment -

- until Alastor yanks him forward, pulls him in face-to-face so that he sees the blazing fury flaring in his scarlet eyes.

"Now, now. Shut your mouth before you say any more disgusting nonsense." Alastor is so offended that his voice lowers into radio static, dark and mottled. "You are wrong, of course. And why do *you* care?"

"I *don't!"* Lucifer says hotly. He slaps his hand away, and Alastor shoves him back, and they end up grabbing each other, fast-swift-movements that lights a fire under him.

He unfurls his wings and leaps up into the air, with Alastor hot on his trail. They twist across the roof of the hotel - the crunch of tiles underneath their shoes - punching and striking with reckless abandon - and it's easier to be with Alastor when they don't talk and Lucifer doesn't have time to overthink.

Subconsciously, he notices that they weave around each other fluidly.

Almost like a dance.

"You are so *fast."* Alastor snarls, unwittingly complimenting him.

"You're just *sloppy,"* Lucifer throws Alastor's words back at him, and his red eyes flash brighter, vexed but intrigued and -

Alastor finally grabs his wrist and shoves him down onto the roof, his back slamming into the tiles painfully. Not for the first time, Lucifer feels how large his hand is, pinning his arm in a vice grip over his head.

But then:

Alastor lets go.

…and…

gently, delicately, softly,

His fingers touch Lucifer's palm, gossamer-light.

It's barely noticeable. Nearly imperceptible. The slightest graze of skin on skin. But it sparks electricity in its wake as Alastor's hand trails further, down-down-down his wrist, across his arm, and he doesn't push him off, doesn't want to even try, just lets Alastor draw invisible paintings with his fingers while using Lucifer's skin as the canvas.

"What are you doing?" It's hard for him to speak. "You - "

"Do you want me to stop?"

Alastor's pupils are blown wide.

And Lucifer shuts up.

He's looking at him - mesmerized as a bead of sweat rolls down Alastor's jawline… trails down his neck… disappears beneath his shirt collar. It's fascinating in its mundanity. Arresting in its appearance.

God, since when did *this* count for entertainment?

But Alastor makes the decision for him.

"2 for 0." Alastor grins wickedly.

"Huh?"

"You should step up your game. I have won two fights, while you have won *zero!"*

"Oh, FUCK YOU! I'll win next time for sure!" Lucifer yells, pushing him off. Alastor cackles and rolls over to sit down beside him, leaving somewhat of a distance between them. They watch the waxing moon together, and it's so red it washes everything around them in a hazy, dreamy glow.

Lucifer turns to look at him, can still feel the ghost of Alastor's fingertips on his skin, warm and careful. It's an intoxicating feeling, and he forcefully yanks his shirt sleeves down over his arm, wrist, palms.

Alastor stands up and pats his suit down neatly, on the cusp of leaving, and Lucifer doesn't want to end the conversation.

Not yet.

So he grabs him by the tail of his overcoat.

“Hmm?” Alastor swivels back, but he’s only looking at Lucifer’s hand, his eyes fixed on it like it’s the most interesting thing in the world.

“Hey,” he grasps for something to say, “do you know what favour you’re going to ask?”

Alastor’s eyes widen, and he taps his chin thoughtfully as he digests his question.

“Is our deal reaching its end?”

“Not a deal.”

‘Well, I have toyed with some ideas.” Alastor’s smile practically doubles in size. “Perhaps I’ll drink your blood! I’ve tried an angel’s head before, and it was quite tasty. HA!”

Lucifer drops his overcoat immediately, and he shudders at the prospect. “UGH! Are you serious? Over my dead body, bitch!”

“Don’t tempt with a good time!” Alastor guffaws, and he turns around, *again,* and Lucifer struggles to think of something to say, *again* -

“COMPLIMENT!” Lucifer blurts out, startling Alastor so much he falters for a second, “DID YOU,” he coughs, choking on air, “have a compliment today?”

“It is quite rare for you to ask first!” Alastor looks genuinely surprised at this. “What an occasion.”

Alastor sits back down beside him in a cross-legged formation. He thinks for a moment, and then rummages around in his pocket, before pulling out the familiar shape of a rubber duck.

“You know, this is unexpectedly well-made! You don’t appear to be a skilled craftsman whatsoever.” Alastor shoves the duck right into his face, and Lucifer has to lean back to avoid getting clobbered by his own creation.

“Wha - hey!” He scowls at the backhanded compliment.

And then pauses.

“Do you just… carry that around with you?”

Alastor looks almost exasperated by this question. “Why, I have no idea where to put it. You gave me this responsibility without even asking if I wanted it.”

“Oh, IS THAT SO?” Lucifer huffs and tries to grab it. “Well, return it to me then -”

Alastor holds it up above his head, cackling because he knows Lucifer can’t reach that high up, not unless he flies.

“No take-backs!” He sings, and Lucifer is suddenly struck with the memory of Alastor saying those same words, when they played music together for the first time. “Now, what is *my* praise, hmm?”

The moon illuminates Alastor from the back, the light rosy and warm, and he’s so overwhelmingly red that Lucifer has to look away.

“You - ” Lucifer sighs from irritation, and lies down onto the roof. “You hurt my head.”

“Is that your compliment today?” Alastor glances at him from the corner of his eyes. “Not a very good one, *Lucifer.”*

It’s a heady rush hearing Alastor say his name, and Lucifer clenches his hands into fists, digging his nails so deeply into his palms that it draws blood.

DATE OF THE BALL: tonight.

DURATION: from dusk ‘till dawn.

“Okay, everyone. Here’s the final guest list!” Charlie taps on her clipboard, and they all crowd around to see it. She flips page after page, and there are at least hundreds of names, all in alphabetical order.

When Charlie spies the name *Katie Killjoy,* she lets out an irritated sigh.

“Ugh, Katie Killjoy.” Charlie actually looks upset for a second before clearing her throat. “Sorry! Sorry - I’m just not a huge fan. But you know, everyone deserves an opportunity, right?”

“What’s she doin’ here, then?” Angel Dust asks. Lucifer flicks through the pages, trying to see if he recognizes any other names in there.

“Well, she personally asked to broadcast the event. I guess, the more publicity, the better?”

“I can think of a million reasons why that is *not* better.” Husk grumbles.

“Well, we’ll just have to… take a leap of faith!” Charlie says cheerfully. “Okay, showtime, everyone. Let’s wait for Alastor to bring our clothes, get dressed, and make it a night to remember! Actually, where is he, even?”

“Looking for me?” Alastor sing-songs from a distance, and his every step is loud on the tiled floor, *click-click-click.*

“Speak of the devil, and he appears.” Husk mutters under his breath.

Lucifer turns around to see him and there’s -

Alastor, he -

His hairstyle is -

It’s tied back into a ponytail.

And Lucifer watches him walk towards them,

And Angel Dust watches Lucifer watching Alastor,

And Charlie runs up to him, cheerfully unaware of what was happening.

“Alastor! Your hair looks great!” Charlie says enthusiastically. “And your outfit, too!”

“Gotta say, you do clean up nice.” Angel Dust suddenly elbows Lucifer, his eyes piercingly searching. “What do you think?”

“Huh - me?” Lucifer blinks, confused. Angel Dust stares deeply into his eyes, and he looks like he’s hanging on to his every word. “Uh. It’s just hair, isn’t it?”

Angel Dust lets out an exasperated sigh. “What about his *outfit,* short king?”

Lucifer had been so distracted by his new hair that he hadn’t even noticed the three piece suit Alastor was wearing, still red and black, but with a tie instead of a bow. “Oh. Looks… fine?”

“You. YOU!” Angel Dust bemoans, slapping two of his hands over his face. “You’re not givin’ me *anything* to work with!”

“Work with what?” Lucifer asks, but Angel Dust has already slinked away, leaning on to Husk for comfort.

“I have prepared a little something for all of you, of course!” Alastor snaps his fingers; in a flash, he deposits beautiful costumes and masks into everyone’s hands. Lucifer looks down at his new clothes, the same colour scheme as usual, red-white-pink-gold, but his jacket is mostly.

Red.

“Wait - why is my coat… red…” Lucifer trails off when he sees Alastor's smile grow wider and wider.

And he regrets asking immediately.

“Let it be known that I am a person of my word.” Alastor places his hand on his chest proudly. “Did you forget? I already *told* you: I’ll get you a red one, to match your face!”

“BITCH!” Lucifer throws his clothes down onto the ground, and Alastor continues to chortle as Lucifer runs after him, sidestepping any sort of attempted attacks that he makes.

“Is this why you wanted to make the clothes, Alastor?” Vaggie realizes. Angel Dust perks up at this, and he leans in nosily.

“Oh? IS THAT SO?” Angel Dust says, and he furiously jots it down on his notepad. “Okay, so… hair’s a bust, but looks like clothes, maybe…”

“What're you writing there, kid?” Husk looks down at his notebook curiously.

“I told ya, I’m sleuthin’, alright?” Angel Dust mumbles, his eyes still fixed on Alastor and Lucifer. “There’s somethin’ fishy going on over there, and I’m going to find out if I’m right.”

“Ugh. The Hazbin Hotel.” Katie Killjoy says, annoyed. She’s standing in front of the hotel with her camera crew, and she’s holding her microphone in her hands. “That royal big shot is a huge fuckin’ pain in my ass.”

She turns around to look at Velvette, who is currently scrolling on her phone. “Hey, you!” Katie barks. “You sure about this? Because if you’re lying to me, I’m gonna sue the shit out of you.”

“Oh, shut up!” Velvette groans. She finally puts her phone down, and she sticks her tongue out in anger. “I ain’t a liar, alright? And like we talked about - you don’t know where you got any of these. Besides, real or fake, you know it’d make a good headline.”

At this, Katie flips through her camera footage, and she cackles a bit.

“Well, it does look pretty good.” Katie admits. “Anything for the views, right?”

“Okay, grandma.” Velvette responds dismissively, and Katie growls at her.

“Oh, fuck you, honey.” Katie motions for her camera crew to follow her, and they step in front of the entrance to the hotel. “Tom, get your ass over here!”

“Already on it!” Tom Trench adjusts his gas mask, and they stand in front of the doors expectantly.

“Alright, then. Lights, camera, action!”

Chapter End Notes

Don’t forget it’s enemies to FRIENDS to lovers 👀

Fun Facts:
- Lucifer avoided him in ch. 6, Alastor avoided him in ch. 8, so now they’re both avoiding each other here
- They talked about changing the conference room to a music room in ch. 7
- Lucifer expressed his worry about Alastor (ch. 4 + 5)
- He’s been interested in Alastor’s coffee (ch. 3)
- Lucifer mentions he has a sweet tooth (ch. 3)
- Angel Dust says he'll start sleuthing in ch. 5
- this is their 2nd fight after the alleyway fight in Ch. 6
- Alastor said the exact phrase "no take-backs" in ch. 3
- He told Lucifer he'll get him a red jacket in ch. 7

The Chaos

Chapter Notes

CH. 10 FANART:
- drawn by: @waterflat
- drawn by: @bamppang73
- drawn by: @dirtgrubber
- drawn by: @androidwiththeparanoid
- drawn by: @kurroovt.bsky.social

Thanks so much!! My Tumblr: @morningstarwrites + Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lucifer is on the verge of tears when he sees Charlie and Vaggie descend down the staircase together, hand-in-hand.

“CHARLIE! My beautiful, perfect daughter!” He sweeps her into a hug, squeezing her so tightly that she chokes at the contact. “You look wonderful! And so do you, Maggie.”

“Oof! Thank you, dad.” Charlie tries her best to breathe. Her long hair is pulled back into an elaborate updo, secured by her gold half-mask, and she’s wearing an elegant black suit. “You look sharp, too! The red really brings out your eyes.”

“Well, I gotta say, I was hesitant about this at first,” Lucifer gestures at his red jacket and pinstriped waistcoat, “but you know what? It’s not bad!”

He turns to look at Vaggie - her ballgown matches perfectly with Charlie’s outfit - and he really, seriously, feels a tear drip down from the corner of his eye.

"Okay, THAT’S IT! C’mon, photo, photo!”

“Dad, please - ”

“Just one or two! It’ll be quick!”

Lucifer ushers them together, positioning Vaggie at the front with Charlie’s arms over her shoulders. They smile sappily at one another, and he takes so many pictures that he runs through an entire roll of film.

“Oooookay, dad, I think that’s enough.” Charlie laughs, waving her hand at him to get him to stop. “Let’s start bringing the guests in!”

“Alright, alright.” Lucifer puts the camera away reluctantly. “But I’m gonna take more later!”

They all walk together to the lobby. Angel Dust looks up at the sound of their footsteps, and he's dressed in a fancy pink suit, his hand holding up a fluffy mask by its stick.

"Heya, sweet cheeks! Lookin' classy!"

"Right back at you!" Charlie looks around. "Where is everyone?"

"Oh, Husk is just checkin' the bar right now." Angel Dust jabs his thumb over to Husk, who rummages through the liquor bottles. He has on a black and white tuxedo, and he left his white ribboned mask on the counter, clearly not a fan. "Not sure where Niffty is, actually, but Alastor is over there, hanging up some decorations."

"Did you need something?" Alastor calls out. He's adding the final touches to the hotel when he turns around, his ponytail swaying almost hypnotically in the air.

And Alastor looks at Lucifer.

And Lucifer looks at Alastor.

And something flickers in his face, an emotion that Lucifer doesn't quite understand yet, his eyes widening smile freezing deer ears tilted all the way up up up up *up* -

"Alastor!" Charlie says. He looks a bit startled to be addressed, and Alastor rips his gaze off of Lucifer to focus on her. "Ready to go?"

"Why, of course!" Alastor takes a few sweeping steps towards them. His eye mask is pulled over his eyes, tied back with a ribbon, and it's such a deep red colour that it almost looks black.

"Okay, so, thank you EVERYONE for your very tireless cooperation!" Charlie stretches her arms out. "Group hug for good luck?"

They reach in for an embrace - all but Alastor, who hangs back and watches them instead. His eyes keep darting back to Lucifer, and it's starting to make him feel uneasy.

"What?" Lucifer snaps. "Got something to say?"

Alastor doesn't respond, which is worrisome in its own right, and he softens his tone by a fraction.

"Hey."

"Hmm?"

"You…" Lucifer says uncertainly. "What's.. up?"

It's enough to bring Alastor back to the present.

"Oh, nothing important. I just think that you are missing a little something!" Alastor conjures up a red top hat, shoves it unceremoniously on top of his head - "GAH!" - and it's so large

that Lucifer struggles to see past the brim. “Ah, yes. Much better now!”

Lucifer yanks the hat off to glare at him. “Okay, I *definitely* don’t want this. This is way too red. I mean, any more and I’ll end up looking like…”

You, Lucifer thinks.

He doesn’t say it. Doesn’t want to voice it, because saying it aloud makes it all the more real, somehow. But it doesn’t slip his notice that Alastor’s red and black ensemble mirrors his - the cut of the jacket, the tight waistcoat, even the tie - and if they stand next to each other, they almost look like a matching pair.

Two halves of a whole.

Or a bizarre salt-and-pepper set.

“The hat ties the whole look together! But you wouldn’t know - you have no sense of style whatsoever.” Alastor leans against his radio cane, smirking as Lucifer’s face twists into a frown.

“Well, there are *other* colours besides red. You look like a walking, talking strawberry.”

“Such a hypocrite! Aren’t you the one who only likes to wear white?”

“If you paid ANY ATTENTION, you would know that I wear - ”

Lucifer stumbles right over Niffty - who is currently huddled down to stare at a bug - and sprawls face-first onto the floor.

“Oh, so that’s where Niffty went.” Angel Dust snickers.

“What’s happening?” Niffty lifts her head up, blissfully unaware of the scene she had just caused. It’s kind of embarrassing, tripping in front of everyone like that, and as Lucifer pulls himself off the floor, Alastor’s shiny red shoes come into his periphery.

“Did it hurt?” Alastor asks, shit-eating grin back on full display, “when you fell from hea- ”

and he just -

he can’t stand it -

“Oh, FUCK you,” Lucifer growls, and then in a fit of immaturity he yanks Alastor down by his pant leg.

Alastor is thoroughly caught off guard and crashes right into him, his head knocking into Lucifer’s teeth. It’s exceedingly painful, a mess of long legs and arms colliding against each other, and Lucifer winces at the contact.

“You will regret that.” Alastor growls. His hand is on Lucifer’s arm, gripping tightly to steady himself, and he’s suddenly flooded with memories of their fight on the rooftop, the

way that Alastor's touch can alternate between violent and careful in the blink of an eye.

The pressure emanating from him is warm.

Stabilizing.

(Kind of exhilarating, too.)

Lucifer shoves him off immediately and points at him, still annoyed by Alastor's antics. "Don't you *dare* use that stupid line on me again." He threatens, already knowing what he's about to say. Alastor merely lifts his hands up to surrender, and Angel Dust ducks his head over, his interest piqued.

"What line?" Angel Dust asks.

"He - um."

For some reason, Lucifer suddenly feels embarrassed.

"He just asked if, uh. If it hurt when I fell from Heaven."

Husk almost chokes when he hears this. "He did *what?"*

"Alastor!" Charlie, bless her soul, looks aghast at this. "That is SO insensitive of you! Why are you reminding my dad about that moment in his life?"

"Just a joke!" Alastor shrugs. "I certainly thought it was funny."

Meanwhile, Angel Dust furiously writes this down in his notebook.

"Name?" Lucifer skims the guest list, and crosses out their name once he finds it. "Okay, great. Go in."

He's standing with Charlie at the front door to check the guests in. The hotel is packed with sinners, and it's completely transformed by the copious amounts of silky fabric, sparkling lights and fresh flowers.

Lucifer looks up at the ceiling, momentarily distracted by the shiny mirror spheres that dangle and reflect light prettily around the hotel. They're ridiculously oversized, but they look breathtaking from up high.

"Did you pick out those mirror… ball… things?" Lucifer gestures upwards. "Those shiny orbs. They look good!"

Charlie follows his direction, and scrunches her nose up in confusion when she sees them. "Oh, that wasn't me. Maybe Vaggie picked those out? We did split some of the decision making."

Before she can say anything else, a huge, looming figure towers over them. Katie Killjoy looks down at them both, flanked on either side with her camera crew.

"It's Katie Killjoy here!" Katie says brightly.

"And Tom Trench." Tom peeks his head out from behind her.

"Ugh, Katie." Charlie grits out through her teeth, and then hurriedly plasters on a Customer Service Smile™. "Welcome! Hope you'll have fun."

"I'm not sure what kind of entertainment you would have at this rundown pile of shit." Katie sneers. "But you know what? Between you and me, I heard from an inside source that it'll be a night to remember."

"Oh!" Charlie pauses at this newfound information. "What… inside source, exactly?"

Katie ignores her and thrusts a microphone in front of Charlie's face. "Care to answer some interview questions, princess?"

"Um, no comment at this time! Just enjoy the party, Katie. And nice to see you again, Tom." Charlie waves at Tom, who waves back - until Katie crushes his foot under her heel.

"Don't wave at her, you little bitch." Katie snarls, and motions for her crew to enter the hotel. Charlie watches as they disappear into the crowd, her eyes narrowed with suspicion.

"Dad, can you help me watch out for Katie?" She asks quietly.

"Oh!" Lucifer nods. "Yeah, of course. Not a fan?"

Charlie laughs awkwardly at this. "I think the feeling is mutual, truly. I mean, it's weird enough that she asked for an invite, but she was also kind of nice, too."

"That was her being *nice?"*

"Dad!"

Katie -*tsks* as she looks around.

“This tacky little hotel looks… alright.” She says reluctantly. “It’s still not as big as my place, though.”

“Not as big as your ego, either.” Tom mutters. Katie elbows him harshly - “OW!” - and she pulls out a USB stick with her manicured hands.

“Alright, fan out, and look for somewhere to plug this into.” Katie commands. “Her party is going to be the only thing this town talks about for weeks, and we’ll be the first to report on it!”

“You got it.” Tom Trench says, and then he brightens up when he sees Angel Dust in the distance. “Oh! It’s the porn star!”

“You and your fucking priorities, Tom.”

“Where are they.” Angel Dust mutters, looking through the crowd. He and Husk are currently walking around with trays of appetizers, offering them to guests as they scan the perimeters.

“Who are you lookin’ for?” Husk growls when someone tries to grab a devilled egg from his tray. “HEY! I’m having a conversation here! Beat it!”

“You know who.” Angel Dust insists. When he spies Lucifer’s red top hat bobbing away, he yanks at Husk’s arm impatiently. “Bingo!"

“Are you still doing *that?**”

**That* was in reference to Angel Dust's investigating, and he huffs at Husk's reaction.

"Look! I just wanna know if I'm right about those two. Which I know I am. C'mon, let's go before he disappears!"

Husk rolls his eyes, but he follows suit without another complaint. Together, they trail after Lucifer, meandering around the hordes of people, and stopping occasionally to offer them a snack -

until they bump right into Vox, who is…

he's currently following Lucifer, too.

"Uh." Angel Dust blinks.

"Oh." Vox says awkwardly.

"What are you -"

"How's the -"

They both stop.

"Are you lost or something?" Angel Dust finally says, crossing his arms together. "Where's ya little gang?"

He feels a shadow over him, and when he looks over his shoulder, Valentino stares down at him with mock pleasantry.

"Angel, baby." Valentino sings. "What are you doing here?"

"I live here." He says flatly. "Want an egg?"

He shoves his tray in front of his face, and Valentino withers at this.

"You can keep your… junk food." Valentino sweeps Vox into his arm and walks away. "See you at the studio later!"

"Ugh." Angel Dust feels his mood dip, and Husk places a reassuring hand on his shoulder.

"You good?"

"Not really." He replies sourly. "I mean, it's fine, since he can't do anythin' to me here, but that ugly mug of his pisses me off."

"Let's watch out for them." Husk suggests. "And… good news for you. Looks like the king is heading over to Alastor."

He brightens at this. "Really? Okay, come on! Let's see what they're up to!"

Husk shoots him a half-smile, and lets Angel Dust drag him away.

Alastor is surveying the crowd when he feels a tap on his shoulder.

“Alastor!” Rosie has a blush-coloured mask in her hands, and she holds it up with a stick. “What a beautiful party. And you look terrific!”

“Oh, Rosie.” He says pleasantly. “You are a vision in pink! Are you enjoying yourself so far?”

“Of course, darling. You know, I brought some of my cannibal sinners with me, but I don’t think there’s much they can eat here.”

“Not tonight, but perhaps next time. I'll bring it up to Charlie!”

They stand side-by-side, and together they look out into the throng of people. They’ve known each other for a long time, had each other’s backs though thick and thin, and for Alastor, it was always a comfort to see her.

“Oh, isn’t that the king?” Rosie says blithely. “We should call him over!”

Scratch that - she was now being meddlesome.

“I don’t think so.” Alastor shakes his head. “We all have our roles tonight. He’s far too busy to - ”

“He’s coming over, actually.”

“I doubt that, Rosie.”

“No, really!”

Alastor finally looks at his direction, and he’s…

Lucifer really *is* making his way towards them. He’s fast approaching, five-four-three-two-one step away, and Rosie does a curtsy when she sees him.

“Your highness!” Rosie, in one fluid motion, pulls him into a hug.

And Alastor literally hears the sound of a record needle scratch,

vrrriiippppp.

“Oh!” Lucifer’s a bit surprised, but he returns the hug, his arms patting her back awkwardly. “Well, um. Nice to see you again, Rosie.” She’s still clutching onto his arms as they step away from each other, and Alastor’s eyes shift to where she holds him, unable to look away.

“I just want to thank you again for helping him out.” Rosie gestures to Alastor. “He’s ridiculously bullheaded, this one!”

“That was - nooooo problem at all!” Lucifer says stiffly. “I just came over because… Charlie’s saying it’s time for you to perform, so.”

“She sent *you* as her messenger pigeon?” Alastor jeers.

“If you had a phone, she could text you, old man.”

“Such strong words from the oldest one in this room.”

“At least I know how to use a cell phone. Do *you?”*

“I know how to use a rotary phone, which is the *proper* method of communication!”

“So you don’t know.” Lucifer smirks at this, and Alastor feels put-out, unable to refute his statement.

“I’ll be up there in a moment.” Alastor says instead.

“Uh-huh. See you around, Rosie. Enjoy the party!” Lucifer looks extremely pleased with himself as he walks away. Alastor squints at him as he leaves, annoyed that he couldn’t think of a good insult in time. He’s so distracted that he jumps a bit when Rosie touches his shoulder.

“Well, well, well.” Rosie sounds uncharacteristically smug. “Did you see that, Alastor?”

“See what, exactly? That you stood by and let him ridicule me?”

“You know that’s not what I mean. And besides, you’re perfectly capable of standing up for yourself.” Rosie waves him off impatiently. “I meant, I gave him a hug, and he reciprocated!”

“You certainly did.” Alastor says dryly. “Rosie, if you keep that up, I’m going to think you’re looking for other friends.”

Rosie shoots him a resigned smile.

“Oh, Alastor. I know you.” Her voice is soft and careful. “You said you wanted to be physically nearby - that you had an urge to be around him? Seems like he’s quite an open person. If you’re ready for that.”

He knows exactly what she’s insinuating. Regrettably.

But…

He doesn't want to acknowledge the truth, where at the core of it all, he just doesn't hate Lucifer as much as he thought he did. As much as he *used* to. They've been tied together by this deal for a few months, have exchanged more than just pleasantries during that duration, and it's been…

~~fun~~

~~enjoyable enough~~

a manageable experience.

He looks at Lucifer, his small back retreating into the distance, and he wonders if maybe the longing would go away if he could just, hold him for a second.

Just for a moment.

And then Alastor gnashes his teeth together.

"I'd try to *kill* him first," Alastor's eyes gleam coldly, "before trying to *hug* him."

Angel Dust and Husk had hid behind a table, watching the three of them chat from a distance. It's hard to make out any of the words they had said, and quite frankly, nothing particularly exciting happened either.

Angel Dust sighs and puts his notebook away. "Well, that wasn't anything. Maybe I *am* readin' too much into this."

"That's okay, kid." Husk pats his suit down as he stands up. "There's always next time, eh?"

"I thought you didn't believe me."

"I don't."

"HEY!"

“But if it matters that much to you, you can bounce your ideas off of me.” Husk says, offering a hand to Angel Dust. He accepts it, grinning the whole time, and Husk pulls him up to his feet.

“Y’know what? I’ll take that!” Angel Dust says excitedly. “So then, let’s go after him - ”

“Just a second.” Husk puts his finger on his lips, silencing him. “Ain’t that Valentino?”

They both look over, watching as Valentino and Velvette slip away into a room that’s clearly marked **NO ENTRY.** Angel Dust narrows his eyes at this, and he sets his tray of hors d’oeuvres down onto the table.

“UGH! I knew that jackass was up to no good.” Angel Dust groans and pushes his hair back. “C’mon. Let’s bust them up before they can ruin anything.”

“You read my mind.”

Lucifer watches the stage as Alastor performs on the piano, his fingers darting nimbly over the keys to play a lively tune. Admittedly, he’s always been a good pianist. Lucifer is supposed to be passing champagne around, but he stands there to listen instead, holding his tray absentmindedly in one hand.

And then the last person he ever wants to see approaches him.

“Hey.” Vox reaches for a flute of champagne, and Lucifer moves his tray away deftly.

“What do you want.” Lucifer says flatly. “You’re not on the guest list.”

“Woah, hey! I was invited, alright? Just here for the party.” Vox stands beside him, not making a move to leave, and they watch Alastor perform together in silence.

This is the most civil they’ve ever been with each other. He's polite but unsettling, and Lucifer looks up at him from the corner of his eye, wondering just what he’s up to.

And then:

“You should stay away from him.”

Of course that's what he's here for.

"Why don't you take your own advice?" Lucifer says impassively. Vox leans down, his expression serious.

"Look. You don't know me, and you don't trust me. But just so you know, Alastor and I, we go way back. In fact, we worked well together. I thought we were friends, but that fucker only looks out for himself. He'll drop you in an instant if that's what's necessary."

Lucifer turns around to fully face him.

"So what are you doing here, then?"

"I want him to suffer." Vox is surprisingly straightforward. "And honestly, you should too. He's just messing around with you. Once he's bored, he'll move on. And you'll be left picking up the pieces."

He… doesn't know how to answer that, actually. Vox shrugs at his non-reaction and pilfers a flute of champagne from his tray.

"Just saying."

He walks away.

And Lucifer wants to say that it doesn't shake him whatsoever, but he knows Alastor a bit at this point. Understands that he likes being entertained. That he enjoys being an unsolvable mystery. And maybe one day, when he's tired of Lucifer, he'll leave him too.

Like Lilith did.

They may be involved in a deal together, but they're not, *together.* Not really anything. Just two ships passing by in the night.

He's pulled from his thoughts when Alastor plays a different composition, a song that he knows. They had performed it together at the jazz club, although it's a bit strange not hearing his fiddle accompany it. Around him, people jump into a lively dance, and at the centre of the crowd is someone he recognizes -

the (very) energetic and (very) familiar figure of Mimzy, romping around like it's her god-given right.

Should I... go over there? Lucifer thinks. He doesn't really have the opportunity to choose, because Mimzy catches sight of him, and she skips over with excitement in her step.

"Your highness!" She bows so deeply that her fuchsia mask almost slips off her eyes. "How are you? So good to see you, and - oh, I am *so* sorry for last time."

"When we had to fight those loan sharks for you?" Lucifer barks out a forced laugh. "Water under the bridge. But, uh, are you two okay now?"

“Who? Alastor? That’s just how we are!” Mimzy says brightly. “Were you worried about us? It’s fine, he’s sweet as a kitten, really. He can’t stay mad at me for long!”

Lucifer... doesn’t really believe any of that.

“Say, would you do me the honour of having a dance?” Mimzy asks, stretching her hand out to him. “I know it was a bit hard last time, but hey - dancing is much more fun with a partner!”

“Oh!” Lucifer thinks about it. Looks at her expectant hand. Listens to the spirited piano tune in the air, and starts to feel a spring in his step, too. “Sure.”

“And a 5, 6, 7, 8!” Mimzy counts, and together they dance the Charleston together.

He’s been practicing secretly for a while, so he’s pretty much gotten the moves down. Lucifer holds her hand and her waist, and he even spins her on one of the counts, making her giggle uproariously.

PLUNK!

Alastor plays a wrong note, the discordant sound echoing in the hotel.

Lucifer turns to the stage, and he catches Alastor looking at him for *just* a second, right before his eyes dart back to his piano sheet.

“So, Mimzy.” Lucifer tries for some casual conversation. “You two have been friends for a long time?”

“Alastor? We’ve known each other through life and death!” Mimzy sounds much too cheerful about this. They dance around each other, a *1, 2, 3, 4* step movement.

“What made you, uh, remain in contact? Did he ever, you know… try to leave you behind?”

“Why you askin’?”

And Lucifer really, *really* doesn’t want to answer that.

“Just!” Lucifer dips her, and Mimzy lets out a whoop. “I don’t really get him, sometimes.”

“Oh, that’s part of his charm! Don’t you think so? I just looooove how unpredictable he is.”

They both twirl on the dance floor, and every time he spins he can see Alastor’s red figure on the piano, tinkering away at the keys with a light touch. Vox’s words are still heavy on his mind, but when he watches Mimzy send a wink over at Alastor, completely free and unbothered, he feels a smile slowly form on his face.

It’s almost the end of the party.

Lucifer hides away on the balcony, his arms resting on the railing. Vaggie and Charlie are performing on stage, and they’re playing a fast, jazzy tune that makes him step his feet to the beat, *tap-tap-tap.*

The whole evening has been a whirlwind blur, equal parts fun and exhausting, and he’s about ready to retire to his bedchambers at this point. Lucifer places his head onto his arms, which is why he doesn’t notice someone quietly approach him from behind.

“He-llo!”

“AGH!”

Lucifer whirls around, and he’s met with the amused face of Alastor, whose telltale smile grows ever-larger at his reaction.

“Oops! Didn’t mean to scare you.” Alastor sings. He’s taken off his mask, which is currently stuffed in his pocket, but it’s threatening to fall out at any moment.

“What do you want?” Lucifer leans against the banister, and Alastor stands beside him. They look up at the full moon together, shining even more brilliantly than the night before.

“Well, I saw you on the dance floor. You know, you were struggling!”

“Wow. Thanks! Probably because *you* kept on missing music notes.”

Lucifer expects him to say something snarky back, but Alastor… doesn’t. He’s pensive for a while. Definitely lost in thought. When Lucifer glimpses over at him, Alastor has his eyes focused on the horizon.

“Your form was not bad.” Alastor finally concedes. "And…"

He looks at Lucifer, and opens his mouth to speak.

But then looks away.

And back at him.

And away.

“Are you going to finish that sentence?” Lucifer smiles wryly.

“In a *moment!”* Alastor snarls.

It’s rare to see him flounder. He covers his face fully into his hands at this point, and the only thing visible are his deer ears, which are completely flattened on his head. Lucifer is a bit fascinated at the sight, actually, and he watches as Alastor slowly pulls his hands off his face and down onto his neck instead, his red eyes glancing over at him uncertainly.

“You would probably be half-decent if you had a good dance partner.”

Lucifer doesn’t fully understand at first.

“Oh. I thought you and Mimzy dance all the time. Isn’t she good?”

Alastor lets out a guttural growl, clenching the railing so hard that it dents under his hold.

“You should know…” Alastor exhales and relaxes his grip, “… that I am an excellent dancer!”

“And clearly the most humble.”

Alastor ignores him and grumbles instead, his smile straining by the second.

“If you were looking to expand your dance repertoire, wouldn’t it make the most sense to ask the best?”

“Are you…” Lucifer can’t believe his ears.

“Are you asking me to dance?”

Alastor’s eye twitches at this. “I am merely asking if you’d like a dance *lesson.”*

It’s his turn to be gobsmacked.

Truthfully, it’s crossed his mind. Thought about it ever since they performed together at the jazz club, when he watched Alastor and Mimzy cheerfully swing and tap together on the stage with nary a worry. But he didn’t - he would never have asked him - and Alastor definitely wouldn’t have wanted to, anyway.

I guess I was wrong, Lucifer thinks.

It dawns on him that he hasn’t responded yet, and the longer he waits, the more aggravated Alastor becomes, his hands wrestling with the railing as though they were engaged in a fight.

“S-sure.” Lucifer stumbles over his words at first.

He then stands up straighter, his eyes staring at Alastor determinedly.

“Teach me, then.”

It’s a completely different experience to dance with Alastor.

It’s still - fun. Incredibly so. Watching him smoothly and confidently transition between difficult footwork is admittedly remarkable. Alastor holds his right hand, although it’s more like the gentlest placement of skin on skin, barely touching. Lucifer has his left hand on Alastor’s bent arm, his warmth radiating outwards.

The kicker of it all is that he can feel Alastor’s hand placed onto his waist, long claws scratching delicately against his shirt and trailing over his skin.

It’s light, and accidental.

But it makes him shiver all the way to his insides.

“Move your foot back here.” Alastor commands, and he follows suit, stepping back as fast as possible.

Lucifer just doesn’t understand…

“Your arm here. No, Lower.”

How the *hell* is he burning up everywhere, almost breathless from the heat, and everything is just.

“Turn here.”

So. *Hot.*

“You’ve got the tempo wrong.”

It’s not a particularly laborious dance.

“Hmm. Better.”

He’s done harder things with less effort.

“Now, kick.”

So why is he winded, like the air is knocked out of his lungs?

Alastor easily pulls him into each move, him leading and Lucifer following, and he belatedly thinks that it really does reflect the nature of their connection together, Lucifer always chasing after his coattails.

The music had faded away without him even noticing. Vaggie and Charlie bow to the audience, waving to the crowd as they clap politely, and Lucifer slows down his steps before coming to a stop.

He waits for Alastor to let go.

But he doesn't.

"I…" Lucifer's mouth feels dry. In fact, he'd kill for some water right now. "That was. Educational! But if you want to know what real dancing is like, you should try the polka. That's my specialty."

"The *polka?"* Alastor crinkles his nose up at this. "Well, based on your little performance today, I am quite intrigued by what dance you're even good at."

"Asshole. You know, Mimzy was a much nicer partner then you are."

"Oh, Mimzy just has a higher tolerance for incompetence."

Lucifer slips his hand out of Alastor's hold -

and Alastor reaches after him before stopping, his hand grasping at nothing but air.

"Huh?" is all that Lucifer can say.

Alastor drops his arms to his side and forces a smile with some effort, his eyes darting away from him. And Lucifer doesn't… what do you even say after this?

"WE - AHEM! Kind of match." Lucifer blurts out, and he immediately wants to take it back. God, why does he never think before he speaks?

It's been weighing on his mind ever since this morning, and Alastor looks down, straightening out his jacket as though he just noticed.

"Do we now? Just because we are both in red?" He sounds like himself again, a bit mocking, a bit fiendish. "It's a flattering colour! You should wear it more often."

"You should tie your hair in a ponytail more often." Lucifer mumbles out unintentionally.

Alastor's eyes widen at this. He takes a defensive step back, and his mask drops out of his pocket in the process, echoing as it falls,

clink

clink

clink.

It lands near his feet, and Lucifer bends down to pick it up.

As he's getting back up, his eyes catch sight of Katie skulking around, and she's trying to act as inconspicuously as possible. He fixates on her as she looks around carefully before hurrying upstairs, and he hears Charlie in the back of his head - *Dad, can you help me watch out for Katie?*

“Uh.” Lucifer turns to him, and absentmindedly shoves Alastor's mask into his own pocket. “I need to take care of something. Can you go find Charlie? I gotta talk to her.”

Without waiting for a reply, he dashes inside, leaving Alastor alone on the balcony. His hand completely demolishes the banister under his grip, tearing the metal as though it were paper.

But Lucifer doesn’t notice.

And then he’s gone.

Katie fitfully searches through the giant monitors in the room.

“Ugh. Why couldn’t one of those stupid Vees do this?” Katie mutters, staring at the USB stick in her hands. It’s marked with a large V on the side, and she kicks at the computer dock angrily. “Or - Tom! Find me a port, now!”

“Are you really going to broadcast this?” Tom dutifully looks through the room. “I don’t want Lucifer targeting my back, Katie.”

“We’re news anchors.” She says impatiently. “Stirring up shit is our job.”

“Oh - found one!”

“Fucking finally.”

Katie leans down and gropes around the dock for the correct plug. “Alright, we’re going live in a few minutes, so just - ”

“Just what?” Lucifer asks casually.

Katie whirls around at the sound of his voice, and she pastes on a professional smile. “Oh, good evening, sir!”

Lucifer ignores her and steps closer, his bright red horns slowly protruding from his head.

“Hand that over.”

“Or what?”

“Or I’ll fucking *KILL YOU!”*

Lucifer’s every breath spits out fire, and he’s standing so close to them that he burns the tips of their hair. Katie yelps and drops the stick, which he scoops up in one graceful motion.

“Thank you!” He smiles insincerely. He shoots one last look at the V symbol before crushing the USB in his bare hands. Katie and Tom stand up shakily, and she sneers at him in distaste.

“Well, you can try stopping the news all you want, your highness, but there’s more where that came from.”

The gears in his head turn and turn and turn.

And he immediately teleports away to find the Vees.

Honestly, he must have checked every room at this point.

Lucifer’s starting to feel a little out of breath, teleporting in and out like this, but he can’t have the Vees ruin Charlie’s party. He leans against the wall for a moment, trying to see if there’s a place he had missed, and in the corner of his eye, he spies a solitary door marked **NO ENTRY.**

“Is that it?” Lucifer mutters.

He surreptitiously opens the door and slips in. The hallway isn't lit, and as he slides against the wall, he feels a sense of unease that grows and grows and *blossoms* when he bumps into someone in the darkness.

He seizes them -

"WH- HEY!" Angel Dust whispers, eyes wide as Lucifer grabs one of his arms. "What are you doing here?"

"What are *you* doing here?" He whispers back.

"We're watching the Vees!" Angel Dust gestures at himself and at Husk. "I think they're up to somethin' but they haven't done anything yet."

"Let's get closer." Lucifer transforms into a hare, and dashes forward first. Angel Dust just grumbles at this.

"Hey, not everyone can shape shift like that, geez."

The three of them make their way to Charlie's office, and peek behind the wooden door. Vox, Valentino and Velvette sit in various spots in the room, bathed in blue light from their phones.

"Looks like it's almost time. Does Katie have everything? I want it to be LIVE!" Vox growls.

"We gave it to her already. Or did you want to do the honours yourself?" Valentino asks, taking a drag from his cigarette. Vox twists around a USB stick in his fingers, the signature **V** emblazoned on the side.

"I could, but I'd rather watch. Let's get a good spot on the floor to see him flip out."

"What do you think is on that thing?" Angel Dust whispers.

"Nothing good, that's for sure." Husk replies.

They all look at one another, and there's an unspoken agreement to take them on together. Angel Dust counts down with his fingers,

3,

2,

1 -

They slam the door open, bursting through - Husk pins Valentino to the wall with his playing cards - Angel Dust blasts bullets around Velvette's body -

and Lucifer yanks out the USB with his teeth, his fluffy hare form galloping at the speed of light.

“YOU - CAN YOU STOP SHAPESHIFTING INTO ANIMALS?!” Vox yells.

“Don’t you three know when to give up?” Lucifer shifts back into his normal form, but the USB is still gripped between his teeth, so his words come out more like a smothered *“dnt chuu fwee knw whn to gib ub?”*

“Get the hell out of our hotel.” Husk threatens, holding his playing cards aggressively.

“Ugh, fine. This party was a fucking joke, anyway.” Velvette takes a photo of them with her phone, and she grins. “I’ll tag you in the picture, though.”

“Please don’t.” Lucifer deadpans. “Actually, while you’re here, can you delete that other selfie -”

“Alright, alright.” Valentino cuts him off, already sweeping them up to teleport away. “You win! We’ll leave you to your party.”

They disappear in a cloud of red, and when the smoke clears, Lucifer looks around one last time just to be sure that he didn’t miss anything. They all rifle through the room, flipping over desks and chairs, and they congregate in the centre of the office.

“I guess we did it?” Angel Dust shrugs. “Looks like Charlie’s party went off without a hitch!”

And Lucifer finally lets out a sigh of relief.

“Where were you three?” Charlie asks hurriedly, ushering them onto the stage. “Okay, never mind, it’s fine! I’m just glad you’re here. Dad - Alastor told me you needed me. What’s up?”

Lucifer hesitates on informing her. He *does* want to tell Charlie what happened, but it’s so close to the end of the night, and he doesn’t want to dampen her spirits in any way, so.

Later, for sure.

“You know what, Charlie? It’s not that important.” He shoots her a reassuring smile. “Why don’t we just play the final song for the audience?”

“If you say so, dad.” Charlie fixes him with a look, but she’s in such a rush that she doesn’t try to question him.

They all stand at their respective positions, and Lucifer takes his spot beside Alastor. Seeing him reminds Lucifer that he still has Alastor’s eye-mask, and he starts to take it out of his pocket when the stage lights dim down.

“Hey, everyone! Thanks for coming out here tonight!” Charlie says into the microphone. “You know, this is our very first party that we’ve hosted here. We really appreciate you being a part of this history with us. And, I have to say - I think it’s been absolutely perfect! So to bid you all goodnight, we’d like to perform a song altogether. It really represents us as a hotel, and for any of you sinners out there who would like to give redemption a chance, we’re open 24/7.”

Charlie smiles out into the crowd, and the audience claps enthusiastically. Charlie turns back to look at them all, her eyes shining warmly, and that’s when -

BAM!

Those round, mirror orbs dangling from the ceiling - the ones that Lucifer noticed right at the start of the party - all split in half at the same time, and thousands of printed out photographs flutter down like snow.

Lucifer picks one of them up.

And he’s never felt so much embarrassment shoot through his veins in his life.

It’s just page after page of… of him and Alastor, and there’s graffiti sprawled across all of them, words like **AN AFFAIR?** or **SECRET SCANDAL?** written in black.

When they performed together at the jazz club.

When they held hands while Alastor was injured.

Even when they fought each other in the alleyway and on the rooftop.

Alastor may be distorted, but he’s recognizable in his glitched-out state, and it’s almost ridiculous how much they’ve done together.

And Lucifer regrets.

He regrets that he didn’t rip down all those *fucking* mirror spheres, didn’t eviscerate the Vees the second they stepped foot in this hotel, didn’t stop this in the first place because he hates turning around and seeing Alastor’s face like that.

Like he’s just seconds away from murdering everyone around him from anger.

There’s a typed-out note on the ground, the words arresting in bright red. Lucifer grabs it, and reads the text:

I suppose we'll have to go analog today! - the Vees

"I… I guess Vaggie didn't pick out those hanging round lights." Charlie says shakily.

Chapter End Notes

Fun Facts:
- Lucifer has wanted to dance the Charleston since ch. 7, and he practiced it in his room (ch. 8)
- They're looking under the red moon again (ch. 9)
- Lucifer's voice is all muffled with the USB in his mouth, reference to ch. 1
- Mind the chapter titles: Ch. 9 + Ch. 10 = "The peace before the chaos"

I'm VERY excited to share the next chapter, I think you'll be pleased! It's called "The Favour" 👀 Can you guess what the favour will be? Please leave suggestions/ideas in the comments, I love reading them <3

The Favour

Chapter Notes

CH. 11 FANART:
- drawn by @cosmilou
- drawn by @starkspi
- comic by: @0-cloud-puff-0
- drawn by @themysteriousauthor18

If you'd like to send me any fanart or ask a question, here's my Tumblr: @morningstarwrites + my Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Alastor's Hit List (in no particular order):

1. Vox
2. Valentino
3. Velvette

"What *is* all this?" Angel Dust rummages through the pile of photographs. "Wait. It's… those two?"

"Oh my GOD." Charlie tries to scoop up as many photos as she can. "Okay, everyone, please stop looking at these! This is not part of our schedule - it must be an awful prank or something!"

The entire hotel is covered with sheets upon sheets of pictures, and every single person is looking at them. Collecting them. Talking about them.

And Alastor, after recovering from the initial shock/outrage/mortification of it all, gingerly picks up a couple of the photographs as well.

Most of them were mildly embarrassing, but bearable. Alastor was used to sinners whispering rumours about him, trying to spread gossip as a means to dethrone him. Carrying Lucifer in his arms? Simply a side effect of battle. Lucifer's hand on his chest? Just an accident, caught on camera.

He has no respect for the denizens of Hell, and he's not worried about their opinion, because he knows that *they know* he'll eat their souls if he really needed to.

But what was completely unacceptable was this:

The picture of him in his private radio tower, lying down with a gaping wound and on the verge of death. He clearly looks… like he's struggling here. Weakened and needing help. And that for some perplexing reason, the King of Hell was there, lending a *hand?*

He crushes the photo in his hand - feels Lucifer staring at him - flicks his eyes over and angrily grits out -

"What."

Alastor's voice is purposefully lowered, quiet and hushed so that only he can hear him. There's that familiar, godawful expression on Lucifer's face, his brows furrowed with worry.

(Always with the worry.)

"I…" Lucifer hesitates, and mulls over his next words. "I'll handle this."

Without waiting for a response, Lucifer soars up into the air. He spreads out all six of his wings, commanding all attention onto him, and he starts to look…

Different.

Blood-red eyes. Sharp horns protruding outwards from his forehead. A long tail, swishing in the air.

And Alastor has to admit:

he's absolutely mesmerizing to look at.

It's his first time seeing Lucifer like this, and it's obvious how he's the most powerful reigning monarch. His sheer strength radiates like the sun, warm yet authoritative, the solitary source of light at the heart of Hell. The sinners around him start to kneel down in reverence, and he has to fight the urge to follow suit.

"So then," Lucifer's voice echoes loudly, "someone's been bored."

It's deathly quiet as everyone waits for his next words.

Lucifer casually holds up a picture. "Don't tell me you think these are *real?"*

There's a smattering of whispers that sweep through the room, but Lucifer silences them by raising a single hand up.

"I mean, we're in Hell! Are you really gonna take everything at face value? And why would we spend any time together? This,"

he holds up a picture of them, holding hands in the radio tower,

"this,"

Alastor's hands on him in the back alley,

“and even *this* - ”

Lucifer pinned down on the rooftop,

“ - are clearly fake. Someone’s gotten really into photo editing!”

He deliberately drops the photographs, letting them flutter slowly onto the ground.

“Y’know, we’ve got nothing in common. I mean, sure. We have jobs here at the hotel, but we fight all the time! We can’t even stand being in the same room together. Talk about dysfunctional, am I right?”

“But I’ve seen you perform together! At the jazz club!” Someone yells out. Lucifer, to his credit, doesn’t react at all.

“Ooh, what a shock. We work together, so we do errands together. You caught us!” Lucifer rolls his eyes. “It was just an evening shift. Nothing more.”

The hotel guests start to look at each other unsurely, still holding onto the photos in their hands.

“Seriously, don’t just believe what you see.” Lucifer shrugs. “There is *nothing* going on between us.”

He speaks with such confident finality that everyone seems to believe him enough, muttering quietly in the background.

“I suppose - ”

“Yeah, why would he even be with the Radio Demon - ”

“Shame, though. These pics are kinda cute - ”

“Alastor, you okay?” Charlie’s voice cuts through the whispers, and she places a reassuring hand on his arm.

“Oh, I’m absolutely perfect, my dear!” Alastor smiles broadly, but he…

… doesn’t understand…

doesn’t understand doesn’t understand doesn’t understand doesn’t understand doesn’t understand doesn’t understand doesn’t understand doesn’t understand doesn’t understand doesn’t understand doesn’t understand doesn’t understand doesn’t understand *WHY* -

he’s MUCH more enraged after hearing Lucifer brush off all those moments together, all that time spent with each other, all those days-hours-minutes-seconds and crushing them to absolutely nothing.

“Really? You look a bit - ”

“Keep your eyes to yourself.” Alastor snaps. Charlie instantly turns away to give him space, but he’s too aggravated to even notice.

He needs to…

leave.

So he does.

And Alastor adds another person to his Hit List:

4. Lucifer

It’s terribly awkward to be in the spotlight, both literally and figuratively. Lucifer can hear murmurs reverberate around him, and it’s a strange feeling knowing that everyone was talking about one thing only, which was him. And Alastor.

And whatever supposed ‘relationship’ they were in, even though the truth of their connection was hardly salacious.

When he lands back on the stage, he realizes that Alastor had disappeared sometime in the middle of his speech. Lucifer taps Charlie on the shoulder, and she pauses sweeping up the photographs to look at him.

“Hey, where’d the bellhop go?”

Charlie looks worried. “I… don’t know. But Alastor seemed upset, dad.”

“Oh, I *bet* he was." Lucifer sighs out. "I doubt he’d want anyone to see these.”

He has one specific image in mind:

the one where he’s healing his wound. And he’s aware that Alastor hates looking weak, detests having any sort of vulnerability exposed, and that he would do anything in his power to get that image obliterated from this realm.

As for Lucifer…

Okay. *Yes,* it’s rather mortifying to have their private moments publicized in this way, but he’s not - it’s not like he ever cared about the opinions of sinners. If it’s out there, it’s out there. He’s more concerned about…

Oh fucking god, why was his first thought about how it made *Alastor* feel?

“Actually, dad, he seemed more angry after you spoke up there.” Charlie says quietly.

“Oh.” Lucifer tilts his head in confusion. “What? Why? I mean, I only said that because…” he trails off, not wanting the hotel guests to overhear, and finishes the sentence in his head.

It’s just the easiest way for Alastor, Lucifer thinks.

If it were fake…

if they weren’t anything to each other…

it would mean Alastor had never been injured, and Lucifer wouldn’t have healed him. All those pictures were just hearsay, half-hearted efforts to unseat Alastor from his power, and that he still is - and always will be - the prideful, infallible overlord.

Charlie waits patiently for Lucifer to finish his sentence, but when it’s apparent that he’s not going to speak anymore, she gives him a sympathetic smile. “Okay, dad. Don’t worry about it.”

Instead, she whirls around to address the audience and leans into her microphone.

“Um, we’re just going to take a quick intermission. If you could all pick up the pictures and hand them to me, I’ll just confiscate them and then we can continue the party, yeah? More champagne for everyone? Dad?”

“Oh! Sure.” Lucifer conjures up a champagne fountain, and everyone collectively *oohs* and *ahhs* over the sight. But as he’s watching the rest of the guests slowly settle back into celebration mode, he’s still too distracted by Alastor’s absence to enjoy the party.

“Sorry, Charlie! I’ll be right back.” Lucifer says hurriedly, flapping his great wings in the air.

And so he flies out to look for him.

It's funny: flying around like this, looking for Alastor... it all feels strangely familiar. Just like when Lucifer was searching for him in Pentagram City.

Back then, Alastor had hid in an alleyway to talk with the Vees.

This time, he's not sure where he could be.

His red eyes scan the landscape carefully, still in his full demon form. "Where are you?"

And then he recalls what Niffty had said to him the first time Alastor went missing -
"Alastor's at his radio tower right now. He's always there when he needs to think."

"Are you really gonna be there?" Lucifer mutters. He glances over at the red building, trying to see if there's a shadowy figure behind the windows. He flies over anyway, enters through one of the broken windows, and…

In the rubble, Alastor stands there silently.

Ominously.

He turns around slowly when he hears Lucifer's arrival, and Alastor's eyes are so cold that he has to take a step back.

"What are you doing here, sir?"

Lucifer notes, with some bitterness, that he had reverted back to using his title.

"You… left." He says cautiously.

"What a *remarkable* observation!" Alastor's eyes tick away into radio dials, glowing bright red in the darkness. "Well, this is quite good timing. I have some urgent business to discuss with you."

Lucifer narrows his eyes at this. There's an oppressive animosity in the air, foreboding in nature. "What is it?"

“I do believe it’s time to end our deal. It’s been several months, has it not? We’ve accomplished so much together.” Alastor's tentacles start crawling out of his back, and he steps forward.

One step.

Two.

“But I suppose to *you,* none of that really mattered, did it?”

Lucifer’s eyes widen at this.

“Hey, wait - ”

Alastor interrupts his protest by striking the ground with his radio cane, the sound echoing in the room.

“Regardless! I know what favour to ask of you now.” Alastor grins maliciously, and snaps his neck to the side. “Would you like to know?”

Alastor doesn’t wait for his response.

“Fight me, as you are now. In your full demon form. And if you hold back, I will fucking *end you.”*

“You can’t be serious.” Lucifer scowls. “Why in the hell would you want that?”

“Did you forget the terms of our deal?” Alastor’s entire body starts to glow green. “I specifically said no *killing,* no *maiming,* and no questions asked.”

“I’m pretty sure fighting would fall under the *maiming* category!” Still, Lucifer feels fire brimming within his hands, his body tensing up for a fight.

“Oh? But how can a lowly demon like me ever hurt you, your majesty? Don’t tell me that you are AFRAID?!”

Alastor launches forward without a warning, and they strike - blow for blow - Alastor chasing and Lucifer flying - the crunch of stone underneath their feet - and *this?*

None of this is fun.

“How long are you going to keep this up?!” Lucifer shouts, blocking Alastor’s punches. He smashes hard, solid-heavy-firm weight that hurts so much more than it normally does.

“Until I ELIMINATE you!” Alastor snarls, and it’s like they’re back to square one, right at the starting point of their relationship. Even worse, because he’s never seen Alastor’s anger directed at him in this way.

And he loathes brawling with him like this, because up until now, they’ve only been fighting for fun, and now he knows what Alastor is like when he’s fighting to hurt.

“That’s not a good idea for you!” Lucifer kicks Alastor so hard he crashes right on the ground. “Don’t forget who you’re *dealing with!”*

Alastor growls anyway, struggling to get himself back up onto his feet. There’s the scent of blood in the air - Lucifer’s clothes are getting wrecked - his punch bruises Alastor right in the face - and then Alastor jumps at him, forcing them to roll around in the wreckage of his radio tower.

“What the *hell* is wrong with you?!” Lucifer throws him against the wall so hard that it cracks underneath his body, and Alastor looks at him with unadulterated hatred.

“YOU!” Alastor’s voice is pure radio static. “YOU’RE the reason.”

“Me?” Lucifer falters for a moment -

and it’s enough time for Alastor to grab him and slam him down onto the floor, his claws ripping into his shoulders threateningly.

“Fake pictures?” Alastor growls, leaning in close. “You can’t stand to be seen with me. Don’t want anyone knowing that you’re fraternizing with the *radio demon?”*

And the puzzle pieces finally slot in Lucifer’s mind.

In a flash, Lucifer smashes his head against Alastor and grabs him by his shirt, shoves him against the wall and pins him there so that he can’t run away, can’t attack can’t ignore him *again* -

“YOU’RE WRONG!” Lucifer yells. Desperately.

Painfully.

“I don’t - I’m fine with being seen together, alright? I was just trying to help you! I said it was fake so that no one would know you were actually injured. And did you really want to give the Vees the satisfaction?! That they showed evidence of you at your weakest?”

Alastor seems to hesitate at his words. His eyes slowly morph back to their usual red, but he still looks down at him callously.

“Well, well, well. Are you saying that you were doing this… for me?” Alastor cackles humourlessly at this. “Oh, sir. I thought you said you weren’t a liar.”

“I’m NOT!” Lucifer fists his shirt so tightly he practically rips it underneath his grip, cloth bunching up into a million little wrinkles, but Alastor merely smiles at his outburst.

“I can’t think of a reason why you would do such a thing. Can *you?* Aren’t we *nothing* to each other?”

And that’s when Lucifer’s last bit of self-control snaps.

“That’s IT!” Lucifer shouts, yanking Alastor down so that they’re face-to-face. “EVERYONE’S your friend except for *me,* huh?! Has it EVER occurred to you that maybe I’m doing this because - because I want to?”

And Alastor looks… completely confused at this. So confused that the tentacles start to retreat into his back, and he looks almost like himself again.

“What. Are. You. Trying. To. Say?” Alastor’s voice is intentionally neutral.

“You’re - ”

Lucifer’s words cascade out like a waterfall.

“You matter to me. Okay? And even if this whole time, this *whole fucking time,* you were just pretending to like me, I… I liked hanging out with you, asshole. Despite everything.” Lucifer laughs shakily. “Maybe because of everything.”

He’s met with absolute silence, and Lucifer wants to just, vanish away. Move to a different city, maybe. Will Heaven take him back from his personal hell?

Lucifer finally looks up at Alastor, and he sees that his deer ears are completely upright in rapt attention.

He’s still pushing him up against the wall, so Lucifer hastily lets go. His tail twitches irately as he waits for a reply, and he can feel Alastor’s eyes following the movement.

“Who…” Alastor stops. Coughs for a second, and his radio filter slips away.

“Who says that I was pretending?”

They stare at each other wordlessly, and he… doesn’t know how to react. Doesn’t know what to say. But what Lucifer can feel, abundant in the air, is -

Something….

…shifting.

And he swallows.

“Prove it then.”

His ultimatum lingers between them, and for a moment, neither of them move.

Eventually, Alastor’s eyes dart madly from left to right, like he’s looking for a way to escape. Lucifer sighs at this, should have expected this to be his reaction, seriously, how else could it *possibly be* between them? and he’s about to fly back to the hotel when he sees Alastor’s hands reach out.

he braces himself for whatever incoming violent action is about to happen,

but it never does.

instead, Alastor…

gently places his hands onto Lucifer's arms. wraps his long fingers around his wrists and gradually pulls him close, closer, distance shrinking between them one centimetre at a time, and Lucifer walks forward, almost hypnotized by how carefully Alastor is bringing him in.

his every touch is so… slow. so unsure. so unlike the self-confident manner that Alastor speaks, fights, interacts with others.

and like two magnets attracting, Alastor finally pulls him in for an embrace.

his long arms wrap around Lucifer's shoulders, and Alastor brings his hand up - runs his fingers through Lucifer's hair to tug it slightly - makes him feel tingles that zigzag

all,

    all,

all,

    alllllllllll

the way through him,

and after a moment, Lucifer tentatively brings his arms around Alastor's waist, marvelling at how tiny it is. they aren't fully touching, and there's a distance between them because he's trying to avoid having his horns dig into Alastor's face, but he would have to rate this as one of his top ten hugs, for sure.

even though the sharpness of Alastor's body juts into him uncomfortably.

even though they're both bruised and battered.

even though Lucifer is utterly emotionally drained.

(he doesn't want to let go.)

still:

there's an inexplicable sense that Alastor was gearing up to say good-bye.

"I… suppose we're done now." Alastor drops his arms away from his shoulders, and Lucifer follows suit, already missing the warmth.

"Done what?"

Alastor squints at him, exasperated.

"Our *deal* is over."

“Not a deal.”

Alastor ignores the interruption. “I’ve cashed in my favour. Shall we bid each other farewell?”

And Lucifer has never been more certain in his life:

“I don’t think so.”

“You… don’t?” Alastor echoes.

“NOPE!”

aaaaaand Lucifer’s words start rolling out with reckless abandon.

“You can’t just - you can’t spend months and months together, and then one day leave, and act as though we have nothing. You just… can’t. Or at least, I can’t. I mean, I… like being with you. Which I NEVER would have expected, by the way.” Lucifer wheezes. “I mean, you? HAH! Not in a million years! But I don’t want to pretend that you’re nothing to me, because.”

He hesitates.

And decides to take the first step.

“you’remyfriend.” Lucifer mumbles under his breath.

Alastor’s face flickers with surprise, and then -

he cups his hand to his ear.

“What was that?”

“You heard me the first time, douchebag!” Lucifer growls, and Alastor shakes his head, his grin stretching widely.

“Oh, I can assure you that I did *not!* Can you please repeat that?”

“You’re… my friend.” And then Lucifer can feel his cheeks burn, red-hot-red-hot-red-hot. “Oh god, I’m so stupid. You’re making me stupid.”

“Why, I had no part in that. You’ve always been this way!”

“Pretty sure my brain went to mush after I met *you,* actually.”

“So.” Alastor’s deer ears perk up at this. “You think I’m your *friend?”*

“ENOUGH!” Lucifer’s so mortified that he transforms out of his demon form - horns receding tail disappearing wings tucking away - and he feels incredibly small under the watchful gaze of Alastor. “I get it, okay? It’s one-sided. If you want to leave, I can’t… I’m not gonna stop you.”

The teasing glint in Alastor's eye disappears, and he tilts his head to the side.

"Oh, you. The more we interact, the more intriguing you become. And you're…"

Alastor hesitates, the discomfort obvious in his voice.

"My… friend, too." He tries out the word in his mouth.

"Unfortunately."

Of *course* he has to tack that on.

"You always need to have the last word, huh?" Lucifer groans. The tension is completely broken, and Alastor smirks, leaning against his radio cane mischievously.

"You know me." He says. *"Lucifer."*

So, Lucifer's face is probably permanently red now.

He's extremely embarrassed by, um, *everything?* But there's an incredible sense of ease too, so freeing that he can feel a skip in his step.

They're walking back to the hotel, and he glances over at Alastor, only to realize just how utterly messed up he looks - tattered overcoat, discoloured bruises, hair falling out of his ponytail - and he recoils at the sight.

"Oh my god." Lucifer points at Alastor. "You look *awful!"*

Alastor's eye twitches at this.

"Why don't you look at *yourself* first before commenting on others?"

"Oh, crap. Is there a mirror or something here?"

They both end up checking their reflection on a shiny surface, and Lucifer runs a hand through his hair in an attempt to tidy it up. Alastor tugs off his hair tie and tries to tie it back, but winces at the exertion.

“Does it hurt?” Lucifer asks carefully.

“HA-HA! You couldn’t hurt me if you tried.” Alastor glares, but it’s half-hearted. He’s still struggling to put his hair back into a ponytail, and Lucifer is suddenly struck with the urge to ask if he wanted help.

It’s on the tip of his tongue.

But he. He doesn’t ask.

And Alastor manages to pull it back into a ponytail anyway, so whatever.

“So… what now?” Lucifer tugs off his red overcoat, although it’s essentially shredded cloth at this point. “Did you want to go back to the party?”

“But of course. We made a commitment, did we not? We have yet to perform the musical finale.”

They start walking again, and Lucifer’s not sure when they decided to go for a stroll; teleporting would have been much faster.

“What about the photos? They’re probably still in there somewhere.”

“Hmm. I had completely forgotten about them.” Alastor taps his chin thoughtfully. “How curious.”

“You, uh… you don’t care anymore?”

“Well, I suppose if they think it’s fake, it’s no harm, no foul.” Alastor shrugs. “Besides, I’m no stranger to being the topic of conversation. And based on your little performance earlier, I assume that those pictures don’t bother you?”

“At first, they did.” Lucifer confesses. “But you know, I kind of think…”

Something good came out of it, Lucifer finishes the sentence in his head. Alastor looks at him inquisitively, and he just sighs.

“Honestly? Not a big deal. At ALL.” Lucifer says instead. They reach the hotel entrance, Lucifer pushes the door-

- and when it swings open, every single guest turns to stare at them.

The attention makes his skin crawl, but he has to admit that it’s understandable. They’re both kind of a wreck to look at, ridiculously beat up, tie askew and hair all mussed up like they had just come back from a fight.

Which.

They did.

Charlie scampers over, her eyes sweeping over them with open-faced concern.

“Did you two fight over this? Look at the state of you! So much blood - and Alastor, your jacket is absolutely ruined! God! I didn’t - are you okay?”

“Charlie! We’re perfectly fine!” Lucifer tries to reassure her. “In fact, we’re better than ever. Right?”

He turns to Alastor, but he’s already walked away without waiting for either of them, his long legs taking him to the stage in an instant.

“Uh.” Lucifer sweats a bit under the pitying look that Charlie shoots at him. “Okay, I know this doesn’t look great, but just… trust me.”

“I *do* trust you, dad,”

except Charlie’s face betrays her total lack of confidence.

Lucifer decides to change the topic altogether. “Why don’t we go and perform the finale? We weren’t away for that long, were we?”

“Are you sure? Dad, you really don’t have to. If you want to go to your room, or something, I would completely understand.”

“No no no no no *no*. I would love to play our song. Okay? Don’t worry about me.”

Charlie finally relents, and together they make it back to the podium. When he conjures up his fiddle, he can feel Niffty tugging at his pant leg, her one eye looking at him curiously.

“You look like a mess!” Niffty declares.

“Yeah.” Angel Dust surreptitiously lowers his voice. “What happened to you two?”

“Oh! I beat him off. Hard.” Lucifer says, and Angel Dust’s eyebrows shoot all the way up.

“WHAT?!”

“Yeah. We just had a fight, but I won!” Lucifer grins proudly. Angel Dust lets out a long-suffering sigh, slapping two of his hands over his head.

“You… little…” He mimics strangling Lucifer’s neck before putting his arms down. “I don’t know why I even talk to ya.”

Before he can even respond, Charlie taps into the microphone a few times, signalling the start of their recital.

“Hey, everyone! Sorry for that little… interruption… but we’re back and ready to perform!” The stage is mostly cleared of photographs by this point, but Lucifer can still see some people in the audience carrying a couple of images, tucking them away in purses or pockets.

“Hey king! Will you sign my photo?” Someone heckles from the crowd, and he can hear tittering laughs ripple through the room.

“Ha-ha. Very funny.” Lucifer says sarcastically.

And then he thinks about it for a second.

“Well, why not? After the show, though.” He shrugs, unconcerned.

“Dad! Really?” Charlie gapes at him. There’s a collective gasp at this, and then a bit of a race to grab whatever remaining photos were left, the scuffling of shoes on hardwood floor.

And then, finally,

finally,

they all perform their song together, their musical ensemble echoing beautifully in the hush of the crowd.

After they finish cleaning up the hotel;

after everyone has left to their rooms;

after everything;

Lucifer plops down onto the couch in front of the fireplace, feeling drained in every single way. It’s been a ridiculously long evening from start to finish, and he contemplates falling asleep right then, right there.

He’s already nodding off when Alastor materializes out from his shadow, stepping in front of the fireplace quietly.

“Oh? What do we have here? Are you *sleeping* on the job?”

“Ugh. What do you want?” Lucifer’s so tired he doesn’t even freak out at his presence. Alastor appears unaffected as always - but his smile gives him away, looking strained and tense.

“About…” Alastor pauses. “Today.”

Lucifer shakes his head vigorously at this, “no no, NO, NOooooo no. Can we not talk about it? Everything I did today was so, EXTREMELY, uncool.”

There’s the sound of footsteps approaching,

tip-tap

tip-tap

tip-tap,

and when Lucifer lifts his head up, Alastor towers over him, looking uncharacteristically dishevelled in his ripped clothes from this evening. Certainly a sight to behold, if Lucifer was being honest, considering how put-together Alastor normally looked.

“Well.” Alastor says casually. “Not *everything.* Your demon form was quite… something.”

“Oh. Liked what you saw, huh?” Lucifer smirks, fully anticipating for Alastor to roll his eyes - shoot back a witty retort - dismiss him with a scoff -

instead, Alastor’s entire body stiffens and he looks away, purposefully avoiding eye contact. It’s so beyond his expectations that Lucifer feels kind of awkward, actually, and he sits up straighter on the couch.

“AHEM-HMM!” Lucifer coughs. “Okay, if you’re going to keep talking, sit down. I don’t want to keep looking up at you.”

“What’s the difference?” Mercifully, Alastor reverts back to his smart-aleck self. “You’re *always* looking up, aren’t you?”

“Then LEAVE, asshole!”

“I don’t think you want that. Didn’t you just invite me for a chat?”

“You’re the one who came here to talk to me! I was about to go to sleep.”

“This doesn’t look like your bedroom. Maybe you should get your eyes checked?”

“Just - ” Lucifer leans his head back, glowering, “can you PLEASE sit somewhere? God.”

“I certainly will, since you asked so nicely!”

Alastor does look around for a seat, and, somehow finding fault with every single chair, decides to sit down beside Lucifer on the couch. It’s a small sofa, a bit of a tight fit, but Alastor still manages to leave a few inches of space between them.

There’s a long stretch of silence where they’re just watching the fireplace, and Lucifer bounces his leg anxiously, unsure what exactly Alastor was going to say next.

It’s then that he suddenly remembers a Very Important Point.

“Guess what?” Lucifer smiles smugly. “I told you I’d win our next fight. And I fucking *did!* The score is now 2-1."

Alastor narrows his eyes at him, vaguely displeased. “I should have known you’d be a sore winner.”

“Well, if you go up against *me,* the result is already decided.” Lucifer cackles. “But you know what? You put up a decent fight.”

“It’ll be my win next time!”

“Oh, sure. Maybe if I gave you some sort of advantage first.”

“Fuck you.” Alastor growls, and Lucifer laughs harder, knowing that he’s cornered him. It’s nice, actually, just messing around together like this, and as they sit in front of the toasty fireplace, Lucifer starts to feel sleepy again, his eyes threatening to close.

But then Alastor taps on his knee with his pointer finger.

“Huh?” Lucifer turns to look at him. He’s… really close, and Alastor’s red eyes are incredibly striking at this proximity.

“Where’s my compliment for the day?”

Lucifer blinks in surprise.

“You - we’re still doing that?”

“Well, why not?” Alastor shrugs. *“Friends* exchange pleasantries, don’t they?”

“I…” Lucifer hesitates.

Gulps.

Feels nervous, even though he’s not sure why.

“Yeah. Okay. You’re…” and Lucifer has already made such a giant ass of himself today that he decides to keep going, “it was, um. Nice. Hugging you.”

Acknowledging their hug makes Alastor’s body completely rigid, and he glances at Lucifer from the corner of his eye, his smile uncomfortable.

“Was it?” His words come out a bit strangled.

“Who…” Lucifer clears his throat. “Who doesn’t like hugs? Right?”

Alastor doesn’t reply, and he digs his claws into the sofa, absentmindedly tearing away at the fabric.

“OKAY!” God, it was getting unbearable here. “Your turn. What about my compliment?”

Alastor continues to shred away at the couch.

“I… It was also…”

His claws completely rip up the cloth.

And Alastor stops himself, places his hand over his mouth as though to shut himself up, his eyes the only thing visible in the low light. The way he trails off sounds more like a thought in progress rather than an end point, and so Lucifer waits.

And waits.

And

waits.

It feels like an eternity passes before Alastor pulls his hand down onto his neck, smile unsure, eyes darting over to look at Lucifer briefly before ripping it away.

“It was quite the experience to hold you.”

And something warm blooms in Lucifer’s chest.

“Um…” Lucifer takes in a deep breath. “About that.”

Alastor drops his hands onto his lap, wringing his fingers together.

Almost...

(Anxiously?)

“Oh?” His voice is deliberately blasé. “You are keeping me on the edge of my seat!”

It’s Lucifer’s turn to ignore his joke. “You know, if you wanted a hug, just… do it. Don’t even have to ask for permission or whatever. I’m not going to say no.”

All he hears is the crackling of the fireplace.

Lucifer peeks over, wondering if he had left or something, but he actually - Alastor had leaned in - placed one hand on the back of the couch, *right* behind Lucifer - and he suddenly feels trapped, boxed in by the sheer size of Alastor’s body hovering over him.

“And if I want to do it again?” Alastor’s voice is lowered. Quiet.

Like they’re sharing a secret.

“Whenever. Wherever.” Lucifer’s words keep slipping out without much thought. “As much as you want. I… I pinky promise.”

Alastor sits back at this, and Lucifer can finally breathe again. “Engaging in another deal with me? So soon?”

“Not a deal.”

Lucifer sticks his little finger out, like what they did all those months ago. “Just a promise.”

“No killing, no maiming, no questions asked?” Alastor’s mouth twists into a smirk.

“You *clearly* didn’t follow those terms!” Lucifer groans, and Alastor cackles at this, looping his little finger around his.

This time, there’s no green lights.

No dramatics.

Just a simple promise.

“Don’t agree to things you can’t deliver.”

“I’m serious.” Lucifer insists. “We already hugged, didn’t we? And the universe didn’t end.”

And Alastor’s smile grows, and grows, and grows…

“The universe did not end.” Alastor repeats.

But Lucifer’s world blows up.

Chapter End Notes

60,000 words later and they finally become friends what the heck. Enjoy some physical intimacy, as a treat! I felt like they couldn’t be real friends until the favour is over, so that’s that. Also you were all so worried that they’d pull away from each other, I hope this makes up for that!

Fun Facts:
- Lucifer flies around the city to look for Alastor, reference to Ch. 4
- Niffty saying he’ll be at his radio tower (ch. 8)
- Alastor tries to tie his hair back into a ponytail again here because Lucifer complimented him
- Lucifer says stupid slang to Angel Dust again (ch. 7)

- Their fight scoreboard is 2 -1 because Alastor won in ch. 6 + ch. 9
- Alastor said he'd rather kill him first than hug him (ch.10) so that's exactly what happened
- He actually hinted about what favour to do (ch. 1).
- Annnnnd now we've gone full circle back to ch 1 with another pinky promise!
- Also, I wrote the entire hugging scene in lower case so that there would be no Capital Letters disrupting their soft intimacy.

Updates will be every Friday from now on, please leave theories/ideas for what you'd like to see in the comments <3

The Spark

Chapter Notes

CH. 12 FANART:
- drawn by @dirtgrubber
- drawn by @radioducky / @Ninecloud_Se7en
- drawn by @mogwai404: twitter + tumblr
- drawn by @love-ghosty: 1 + 2
- drawn by @shooison

My Twitter: @morningstar_ao3 and of course, find me on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites

See the end of the chapter for more notes

For the first time in a long time, Alastor feels a sense of relief.

There's a spring in his step as he walks towards the kitchen, finally understanding his ~~curious~~ cumbersome attachment for Lucifer. The strange desire to seek him out. The need to get his attention in whatever microscopic amount possible.

He's met many eldritch demons with incredible power, but *Lucifer?* Truly an unparalleled being in Hell. Fighting him in his full form was equal parts thrilling and dangerous; an adrenaline rush that coursed through him entirely, demanding to be noticed.

A memory he won't forget.

(A memory he doesn't *want* to forget).

Although, there's a meddlesome thought in the back of his head, whispering traitorously:

He's very pleasant to hold.

Alastor waves it away impatiently. In lieu of thinking about it any longer, he pushes the kitchen door open -

- and finds that it's already occupied by Angel Dust and Husk, their eyes snapping over to him in fear. Although, Alastor is more preoccupied with the images scattered on the kitchen table.

"Oh? What's this?" He peers at the photos, and immediately recognizes where they're from. "Did you gather some mementos from the ball? How very sentimental."

"I'm just keepin' them for some investigative work, alright?" Angel Dust hastily gathers them into a notebook, but Alastor rams his radio staff onto the table, stopping him in his

tracks.

“What sort of investigation? Care to share some details?”

“Uh… an investigation into… human… nature?”

Angel Dust sounds completely unconvincing, but Alastor ignores him, picking up one of the photographs instead. It’s of him and Lucifer in Rosie’s Emporium, collecting the clothes that Charlie had ordered - an incredibly ordinary task.

In the bottom corner, Alastor notices that Lucifer had signed it, his signature haphazard and messy.

“Hmm. Don’t you want my autograph as well? Or did you only require Lucifer’s signature?” Alastor tosses the photo back on the table, right in front of Angel Dust.

“You - ” Angel Dust pauses. Rubs his temples. Looks at him with even more shock, if that was possible. “Firstly, you *want* to sign them? And secondly, since when were you on a first-name basis with the king?”

“Well, why not?” Alastor conjures up a red marker and starts signing them with an elegant flourish. “With my autograph here, it will only increase the value, wouldn’t you say?”

He pointedly ignores Angel Dust’s second question.

It’s hard to convey their newly-cemented friendship in words. Lucifer himself was… awkwardly earnest. Alastor wasn’t blind to the naked concern that Lucifer showered upon Charlie,

and occasionally,

(perplexingly),

on him.

He’s just confused as to *why* Lucifer cared for him.

Alastor isn’t a good person.

It’s not something he’s concerned about - he’s never wanted to adhere to some code of lofty ethics - but he’s not sure what exactly he did that made Lucifer want to be friends with him in the first place.

None of *that* matters, of course. What matters is that Lucifer *is* his friend, a powerful ally, and now Alastor has a permanent seat on the winning side.

“Are these really fake images?” Husk looks at Alastor suspiciously. “Seems a li’l too real, if you ask me.”

Alastor stops signing for a moment.

“Why don’t you take a guess?” He smiles coldly, a warning for them to stop asking questions. They get the hint, and Husk rolls his eyes at his non-answer.

“Touchy bastard.” Husk collects the photos into a neat stack before handing them to Angel Dust. “You must have been shittin’ yourself when these photos fell down, though. The three of us dealt with the Vees beforehand, but those motherfuckers really had back-up plan after back-up plan, huh?”

“The three of you?” Alastor tilts his head to the side.

“Yeah. Me, Angel, and the king.”

Angel Dust pulls out his phone and opens up Sinstagram for Alastor to see. “Here’s us moments before we got rid of ‘em. Don’t I look good?”

Alastor leans in closer to the phone -

Posted by: Velvette
Caption: WHO CALLED THE PARTY POLICE?
Photograph on Sinstagram

It’s the three of them in Charlie’s office, looking caught off-guard as Velvette takes the photo. Lucifer looks - well, he -

He’s in mid-blink, *again,* and Alastor can’t help the snicker that slips out of his mouth.

“Did you show this to him?” Alastor asks. Angel Dust looks at him suspiciously.

“Not yet. Why?”

“If you insist on answering a question with a question, I will end this conversation here.”

Alastor morphs away into shadow…

…and makes his way to see Lucifer.

“Is this really necessary?”

Husk watches as Angel Dust pins up the photos from the ball on a cork board. It's already covered with a variety of sticky notes and ripped out paper from his notebook, and Angel Dust just grumbles at him.

"This is my job now. Did you even *hear* Alastor today? He sounded less creepy than usual. Which makes him even creepier."

Angel Dust unravels a spool of red thread while looking at his cork board.

"And - come on! Calling him by his first name? Signin' these photos? Why's he being so easygoing all of a sudden?"

"I don't know how deep you wanna stick your neck into this, kid." Still, Husk passes some more photos to Angel Dust, who pins them onto the board. "Got any theories so far?"

"I mean, the easiest conclusion is that they're in a secret relationship, but," Angel Dust jabs his finger at a photo, "they ain't smoochin' or hooking up or anything on here. And there was like, a million photos at the ball! So I guess, they're…"

Angel Dust looks at the photos carefully.

"Well, y'know what? My hunch is never wrong. I just need some more proof. Maybe I should ask one of Alastor's friends or something."

"You can always ask Niff." Husk suggests. "She's got her eye on this kind of stuff."

"Niffty?" Angel Dust perks up at his recommendation. "Yeah, baby! I'm gonna have her as my little spy."

"That was NOT what I meant - "

"But it's what's gonna happen!"

And Husk slaps his hand over his face.

Lucifer throws his frayed red overcoat over his chair, and something comes tumbling out of the pocket.

Something shiny.

Dark red.

With a black silk ribbon.

And after a moment, he realizes it's the mask that Alastor had dropped at the ball.

"Wait." Lucifer picks up the mask. "I still have this?"

The mask stares back at him wordlessly, and without even thinking much about it, he places it next to the rest of Alastor's belongings:

1. the pen
2. the bowtie
3. the coffee cup
4. the photo of them at V Tower

The items are piling up at this point, startlingly red against the rest of his bedroom, and Lucifer feels a bit panicked at the sight.

"Okay. THIS?" He gestures at the desk frantically. *"This* is too much. It's time to… how do I even give this back?"

More importantly, how is *Alastor* going to react?

They may be friends now (which, admittedly, makes Lucifer a teensy bit giddy), but friends don't hoard other friends' belongings, right? Friends who are friending with one another just do friendly things and since they've friended each other -

He takes a deep breath.

Okay, I'm chill. Extremely chill. Lucifer thinks, still staring at the Alastor Altar™. He'll just have to suck it up and give everything back.

Orrrrrrrrr, better idea: he can keep pretending that none of this ever happened -

"Salutations!"

"GOD!" Lucifer yelps, always startled when Alastor materializes without warning.

"Oh, you flatter me. I'm no god - just the radio demon!" He sings. Lucifer hurriedly blocks the desk behind his back, and Alastor's eyes follow his movement. "Hmm. You are acting strangely. Are you hiding something?"

"Nope!" Lucifer blurts, and then rephrases. "Well… yeah. But. Hooooh boy. Okay, don't take this the wrong way. I repeat, do NOT take this the wrong way."

"Colour me intrigued." Alastor leans on his radio cane. "How scandalous could it possibly be? Did you get more incriminating photos from the Vees?"

“Oh, we’re joking about that now, are we.”

Still, Lucifer takes a tentative step to the left, and Alastor finally, finally, *finally* sees the table in all its glory.

Lucifer waits for his moment of judgment, but -

Alastor is dead silent.

Alarmingly so, actually.

He peeks over at him, wondering what he exactly he’s thinking about, but Alastor’s expression is completely indecipherable. Is it disgust? Anger? Discomfort?

But then he hears a muffled snort.

A louder chortle.

And eventually, Alastor lets out a full-blown laugh, clutching his radio cane for balance. “Did you make a *shrine* for me? Whatever for?”

“It’s not a shrine, you bitch!” Lucifer scowls - scoops the objects up his arms - shoves them into Alastor’s arms, who looks down at them in confusion. “This is pretty much a lost and found at this point, alright? You keep leaving your shit behind!”

And then Alastor shoots him the most insufferable smirk.

“Is that so? What a terrible burden for you! But, it does beg the question: why did you keep all these?”

“To… give them back to you. Obviously.”

Alastor sifts through his belongings and examines his coffee cup. “Such an angel. Doing things out of the goodness of your heart. I’m truly touched.”

But then he drops the items back into Lucifer’s hands.

“Why don’t you continue holding onto them for me, then.”

“Hey!” Lucifer objects, all the while cradling them carefully. “This is all *your* crap!”

“But you took such good care of them.” Alastor’s eyes dance with glee. “You even arranged them so prettily. Really elevates your room, I would say!”

Lucifer thrusts the items back into Alastor’s arms.

“Well, I don’t want to take your stuff away.”

Sure, he may have held them hostage during the past few months, but they were still Alastor’s belongings. Definitely not his to claim ownership of.

Alastor just… looks at him. Ruminates a bit. Eventually, he plops the items back onto Lucifer's desk and organizes them back into their original positions.

"Shall we make an exchange? I'll give these to you. And in return, why don't you make me another one of your," Alastor gestures to the pile of rubber ducks in the corner, "little… rubber duck creations."

"You want. A duck?" Lucifer blinks,

and then he's so excited that he jumps into Alastor's personal space, his eyes sparkling.

"DID YOU LIKE THEM?" His enthusiasm catches Alastor off-guard, based on the way he stares back at him. "Oh HELL YES! I'll make you one. Ha-HA! Okay, I gotta think about what design to do."

Lucifer sits down on the ground to rifle through his duck pile, inspecting each of them with great care.

"Hmm. Maybe something like this… or maybe… no. NO. Who am I kidding? Absolutely not this one."

Lucifer starts tossing out the rejects, but every time he throws a duck out, it hits Alastor

(squeak) on his face

(squeak) his shoulder

(squeak) his leg -

"Why don't you take some time to think about it first." Alastor's eye twitches as another duck (squeak) hits his nose. "Can you pause for a moment? I know something that would be of great interest to you!"

Lucifer does, in fact, stop his rummaging.

"What?"

"It looks like you've made another appearance on those distracting rectangles." Alastor draws a little rectangle in the air, and Lucifer scrunches his nose up in confusion.

"The what?"

"The cellular device!" At Lucifer's blank look, Alastor continues to elaborate. "The *gram.* The media where you socialize with one another."

"Okay, come on. You know that's not what it's called."

Still, Lucifer checks his phone - types in Velvette's username - and promptly groans when he sees the picture she uploaded.

“You know what?” Lucifer closes the app angrily. “Enough is enough. I’m gonna teach them what happens when they try to come at me.”

“Oh? How very entertaining!” And Alastor *does* look interested. He crouches down beside Lucifer, who’s still seated on the floor. “What do you have planned up your sleeve?”

Lucifer leans back on his hands. Tilts his head to look at Alastor properly. They watch each other, red eyes staring into gold ones, and Lucifer shoots him a sly grin.

“Wanna find out?”

It’s a roundabout invitation; an offer to go together.

Alastor seems to weigh his options. He picks up a duck from the pile, looking deep in contemplation, as though he’s unsure if he should accept. And his hesitation… makes Lucifer second-guess himself.

Maybe…

he shouldn’t have asked?

Lucifer sits up straighter. “Uh. Or not! HA-HA! Oh, golly. I’m gonna head out now - ”

Alastor tosses the duck at his face (squeak), stopping him mid-sentence.

“An excursion for some destruction?” Alastor smiles, and he looks particularly malicious under the light. “I certainly won’t say no to that.”

They teleport separately to the V Tower, and Lucifer is starting to hate the sight of the neon-pink building.

“I’m thinking of hitting them where it hurts.” He turns away from the tower to look at Alastor. “Obviously, VoxTek controls all kinds of technological businesses, products, whatever. If we cause a power outage, it’ll completely halt their work production for a while, make them lose tons of money, plus it’ll ruin Katie Killjoy’s news broadcast. BO-NUS!”

He gestures towards the cell towers and power lines, intimidatingly tall in the distance. “If you transform into your giant, uh, tentacle form, you can knock all of those down, and it’ll affect the entire city.”

“What a fun little idea!” Alastor simpers. “But I do have one small critique.”

“Of course you do.”

“Oh, you will want to hear this. Vox has cables that he attaches to his head to generate electricity, even without the power lines.” Alastor taps his head for emphasis. “Why don’t you go into his monitor room to destroy them?”

“That’s…” Lucifer sighs out in defeat. “Good to know, actually.”

“Indeed. I am just full of good ideas!” Alastor smiles broadly, and Lucifer crosses his arms, not wanting him to get the final word in.

“Full of ego too, apparently.”

“Coming from *you?* Don’t you embody the sin of pride?”

“Yeah, but you’re really giving me a run for my money. If you’re looking for a career change, my seat is open.”

“What a generous offer! But I already have a job at the hotel.” Alastor leans down. “And I find that quite difficult already. You should know that I work with someone who’s extremely argumentative.”

“HA-HA!” Lucifer laughs insincerely. “I know how how you feel. I *also* work with a world-class jerk.”

They’re standing extremely close, and he can see the rise and fall of Alastor’s chest when he breathes. His eyes flick up, up, *up,* and they glare at each other, but it’s lighthearted - not serious at all - and the curve of Alastor’s smile is doing something weird to Lucifer’s mind.

Like he wants to measure it with a protractor or something.

It’s when neither of them speak for a while that Lucifer coughs, yanking at his own bow-tie to breathe, because WOW, can someone give him more air, asap? “OKAY! Good talk. How should I reach you? Since *someone* doesn’t know how to use a cell phone.”

Alastor summons up a small shadow being. “Oh, I’ll reconvene with you once I’m done. This little one will serve as a signal, and it’ll guide you through again.”

“Hey there, buddy.” Lucifer greets. It seems to recognize him from the last time, scampering over and latching onto his leg affectionately. He didn’t particularly think that it was cute before, but watching the creature wag its tail makes Lucifer want to pet its head.

So he does.

“Please do not pet it.” Alastor sounds peeved. “It’s on the clock.”

And then he bolts off into the distance.

When Lucifer teleports into Vox’s monitor room, it’s surprisingly empty; just a large space with a million blinking screens. He walks to the centre of the room and sits down on the chair, surveying the displays carefully.

“Where are those goddamn Vees.” Lucifer mutters. Eventually, he finds them in a fancy underwater room, engaged in some sort of heated discussion.

But then he gets distracted by another screen:

Alastor tearing down as many power lines as possible, looking positively gargantuan in his full demon form. Lucifer watches as his giant tentacles pull down the poles effortlessly, watches and watches and *watches* -

- until Alastor’s shadow creature taps his leg to get his attention.

“Wha - oh!”

The shadow minion points at Vox’s cables, attached to the chair he’s sitting on.

“Right.” Lucifer yanks them out in one motion - makes it sputters and spark - and then throws the cables over his shoulder without a care. They’re completely destroyed at this point, impossible to fix, and the shadow creature nods with satisfaction.

“Well then. Time to deal with the rest of this.” Lucifer rubs his hands together to electrocute the control panel. Everything bursts into blue light, and the smell of burning electronics is pungent in the air.

It’s at that moment when every single light shuts off.

“Huh.” Lucifer can feel the shadow being, still clinging onto his leg. “Looks like your master took down the power lines.”

It giggles before digging its claws deeper into the hem of Lucifer’s pants.

“So, uh…” and he feels a bit awkward talking to this thing, “is he gonna come over now, or what?”

“I see you’ve dealt with their control centre.”

“ACK!” Lucifer squawks at the sound of Alastor’s voice. It’s pitch dark, so he can’t make out where he is. “Can you give a warning next time?”

“You should expect that I’m *always* about to appear!”

“Well, that’s no way to live.”

Alastor's laughter echoes in the empty surveillance room. “Oh, I prefer to stay vigilant at all times. Perhaps you should take a page out of my book and hone your sixth sense, hmm?”

“You know what? I can detect danger just fine. You’re just no threat to me.” Lucifer smirks, and even though he can’t see him, he can *feel* Alastor’s annoyance.

“We’ll see about that the next time we fight.” Alastor’s sentence echoes in the chamber, *fight-fight-fight*... and then Lucifer starts to walk, trying to find where he is based solely from his voice.

“So now - ack!” He bumps into someone - Alastor? - in the darkness. “Oh god. You - that’s you, right?”

“Indeed.” Alastor says dryly. “You stepped on my foot!”

“Oh. Whoops.” Lucifer paces around nervously. “I didn’t mean - oh!”

“Well now! That’s my other foot.”

“Okay, you know what? Stop complaining, and start doing something, then.”

He doesn’t respond, and Lucifer puts his arms out to feel his way around in the darkness. It’s a bit worrisome how silent Alastor is, so quiet that he thinks maybe he’s secretly teleported away.

“Are you…” Lucifer hesitates, “still there?”

And he answers,

but not with words.

Something clasps around Lucifer’s arms, and it’s after a beat that he realizes it’s…

it’s Alastor’s hands.

Has to be.

He recognizes it now, the feeling of long claws wrapping around his forearms, the startling gentleness that comes only when Alastor feels tentative, uncertain about his actions.

It trips him up. Makes him kind of confused, actually, and all he can do is let Alastor pull him in, one step at a time, until there's just a little bit of space between them, *just a little bit,* yet it still feels like they're oceans apart.

And he already knows the answer, but:

"Please tell me that's you and not some mysterious third person."

"Stop fidgeting." Alastor says exasperatedly, all but confirming. They stand there, face-to-face, Alastor's hands on his arms, and he's a reassuring presence in the darkness. "If this is the only way to prevent you from stepping on me, so be it."

He sounds so unconcerned. Exceedingly casual.

And then Alastor's hands start to trail down his arms.

He's mesmerizingly careful. Moving at a near glacial-pace. Lucifer can feel him even through the fabric of his jacket, his palms feather-light, moving

lower…

lower…

lower…

until Alastor's hands cradle around his wrists, just a lingering touch. Any further, and they would be holding hands.

But they don't.

And then Alastor leans in, his eyes flickering eerily in the darkness. "Do you see me now?"

"Um." is Lucifer's articulate reply.

He's suddenly struck with the memory of their hug, and he's grateful for the darkness now, because he can feel the heat bloom onto his face again. It's unnerving how expressive he is - it's never really mattered to him before, back when he was alone.

But ever since that night. When they held each other. Made a new promise. Alastor hasn't… they haven't hugged, or anything even remotely like that.

It's not a big deal.

Except.

Maybe he was being too presumptuous. Maybe Alastor just did that as a last resort. Maybe he shouldn't have even offered.

maybe maybe maybe maybe maybe…

While Lucifer's spiralling into an endless circle of what-ifs, Alastor lets go of his arms, slowly but surely.

"Follow the sound of my voice."

And:

Alastor walks away.

And:

Lucifer feels like he's turned into stone, unable to move.

He only held his arms for a little while, so why does it feel so weird without Alastor's touch?

"You'll get stuck here if you don't come!" Alastor calls out.

"You didn't speak at all!" Lucifer finally advances, catching up to him, and they walk out side-by-side. They exit into the hallway, which is dimly lit by strips of LED lights on the floor. Alastor looks down at Lucifer, and the lighting envelopes him in an unnatural blue glow.

"Well! What now?"

"We're gonna fight them." Lucifer replies, and Alastor's deer ears flick up with interest.

"How straightforward. Did you have a tactic in mind?"

"You know what? Just stop talking and follow me. They're in this underwater room, so - "

They hear the Vees before they see them, footsteps echoing in the hallway, only slightly overshadowed by the sound of their raised voices.

"God, why doesn't this fucking phone work!" Velvette grumbles. "And what the hell happened to all the lights? Vox, you had one fucking job, and you can't even do it right!"

"Shut up, alright." Vox says flatly. "I'll just hook up the cables, and everything will be back to normal."

Without even thinking about it, Lucifer dashes back into the surveillance room. It's only after a beat that he realizes Alastor is still outside, dilly-dallying for some reason.

"Get back in here." Lucifer hisses at him.

"You do realize they are making their way into that exact room?" Alastor arches an eyebrow, and Lucifer groans.

"Just come *on!"*

He takes matters into his own hands by pulling Alastor back into the monitor room - hand clutching his bare wrist - forcing them both flush against the wall in an attempt to hide. He's

too wrapped up in concealing their presence to notice the way Alastor's eyes are fixed on where they're touching, engrossed with the way Lucifer grips onto him.

And then he shoots Alastor a wicked grin.

"Let's threaten them. Go hide in your shadow first."

"I don't think I like your tone."

"Just DO IT!" Lucifer whispers harshly, and then he transforms into a flying squirrel, darting away to the darkened monitors.

The Vees enter, illuminated by a single source of light - Vox's head, bright and blue. He stands out in the darkness, and Lucifer watches as Vox walks towards his chair, leaning down to feel around for the cable.

"Okay, someone removed the cables. I can't get the lights back on." Vox sounds pissed. "And I won't be able to get a replacement until a week later."

"Are you serious?!" Velvette yells. "My followers will want to see me! Get it fixed, now!"

"Forget your stupid followers!" Valentino snarls. "How am I supposed to film my porn videos? You know, everyday that *someone* isn't getting fucked, is *me* losing out on money!"

"You think I like this?!" Vox snaps back. "I was supposed to launch angelic security this week! Now I have to postpone it!"

They keep squabbling, so distracted by each other that Lucifer is able to jump up into the air, gliding all the way down until he lands on Vox's shoulder.

"Hey, bitch."

"AGH!" Vox swipes at him, already knowing who he is. "YOU AGAIN! I am so FUCKING sick of your face!"

Lucifer cackles while he transforms back, spreading out his six wings. "Oh, the feeling's mutual! Just here to return your gift from the ball."

He swoops down and yanks Velvette's phone, crushing it into pieces with one hand.

"Hey!" She protests. "What the fuck, old man?"

"Since you like taking photos so much." Lucifer snickers and sprinkles the phone bits back into her hand. She scowls and tries to grab at him, but he speeds away in response.

"Are you here for a particular purpose, your highness?" Valentino says mockingly.

"Oh, just a friendly little visit!" Alastor slinks out from shadow and strikes Valentino with his tentacles, knocking out his cigarette holder from his hands.

“I should have known you’d come back.” Valentino grins. “But you know, even if you have Lucifer on your side, you still lost to us seven years ago. What makes you think *you’ll* be any better this time? Are you gonna hide behind Lucifer’s big shadow?”

It seems to hit a nerve with Alastor, and his eyes shift into radio dials, propelling himself upwards with his tentacles. Alastor swerves and dodges Valentino’s blows, but the movement makes his rubber duck fall out of his pocket, landing onto the ground,

(SQUEAK)

and blazing-hot fire starts to hiss out of the duck -

ignites the room into a bright red -

flames lick up every surface -

“What the HELL is this?” Valentino shouts, trying to stamp out the flames. The fire crawls up his long overcoat, and he yanks it off angrily. “Not my coat! Do you know how many videos I had to sell to get this?!”

“That duck… breathes fire?” Alastor’s eyebrows shoot up in surprise. It would almost be a hilarious sight if it weren’t for the hellfire that was rapidly spreading all around them.

“Ohhhhhhhhhh.” Lucifer says sheepishly. “Some of them do.”

“Some?”

Lucifer feels increasingly mortified. “Sometimes I feel like adding in a little extra razzle-dazzle, alright? Sue me!”

The flames engulf the whole room, completely demolishing the monitors at this rate, and Alastor swipes the duck off the ground. “I believe we’ve made our statement. Shall we make our exit?”

Lucifer looks at the growing fire and the broken screens and Valentino yelling and Velvette screaming and - “Yep! Let’s get the hell out.”

Unfortunately, when he turns to look at the entrance, Vox is standing there like a one-man blockade.

“What the hell is wrong with you two?!” Vox looks absolutely livid. “How are you *still* together? I was trying to tear you apart. I thought you’d be too upset about the photos that you would split.”

He then turns to glare at Lucifer. “Didn’t I tell you? He’s just going to leave!”

Alastor glances at him from the corner of his eye. “You spoke with Vox?”

“Just - when you were performing. At the ball.” He says hastily. As Alastor digests this info, Lucifer feels vaguely like he did something that he shouldn’t have.

“Let’s end this discussion now.” Alastor says firmly. “Whatever we do is our business.”

“You’ll team up with him-” Vox scowls, pointing at Lucifer angrily, “-but when I ask you to join the Vees, you say no? Why not us?”

There’s a beat.

“Why not *me?”*

And Vox sounds more sad than angry.

Alastor doesn’t seem particularly swayed by his display, and smiles at him coldly. “We have too many differing opinions, Vox. We may have been friends before, but I think it’s best for everyone that we separate here.”

Vox lets out an exasperated sigh at this, and then he steels himself again, regaining his usual composure.

“If you’re here for the photos, you’ll never find where they are.”

“Oh, keep them.” Alastor says dismissively. “Feel free to spread as many rumours as you want. I simply do not care.”

He then turns to Lucifer.

“Make a portal.”

“A little ‘please’ wouldn’t hurt, asshole.” Lucifer grumbles, but he summons up a golden portal anyway, stepping through it. He turns around, and…

Alastor is still standing there, looking at the flames in deep thought.

“Hey.” Lucifer says.

Alastor doesn’t hear him.

“HEY.”

He’s still turned around.

“ALASTOR!”

And Alastor finally snaps out of it, whirling around at the sound of his name, eyes widening - deer ears perking up - his whole attention fixed onto Lucifer like he’s the only thing that matters.

Lucifer extends his hand out, fingers outstretched. “Let’s go.”

Alastor sort of just looks at him, not making a move at all.

And for one horrifying.

Agonizing.

Painful second, Lucifer thinks he's going to brush him off. Fuck - why did he do that? Why did he offer his hand out like that? When Alastor hasn't said he wanted to. When he can barely even place his hands on Lucifer's arms. When he's so touch-averse, every little point of contact he offers up is minuscule in scope.

Lucifer falters for a second, drops his hand down -

- and then Alastor grabs onto him, palms sliding against each other like it's second nature.

Firmly.

Determinedly.

(The most resolute touch he's ever imparted.)

And Lucifer pulls him through the portal.

When they make it out, the city is pitch black.

It's strange seeing Hell like this, completely dark and quiet. The only source of light is from the red stars overhead, so bright when there's no electricity obscuring its brilliance.

Alastor is still holding onto Lucifer's hand, unable to remove it.

And…

Not for the first time, Alastor thinks about their new promise, how he brought Lucifer into his arms, the way he looked, long tail curved horns red eyes red wings red red *red* -

Alastor ~~likes~~

~~doesn't mind~~

despises it.

It’s a foreign feeling for him to seek out contact. He’s not used to it. Confused by it. It’s both comforting and appalling that holding Lucifer helps with the pain, alleviates some of the difficulty, if only for a little while.

He doesn’t ask for an embrace.

(He won’t ask for one.)

But, somehow, Lucifer still lets him hold his hand. For a moment, Alastor can see his face, honest to a fault, confused and red. Probably from the illumination from the stars.

“FUCK yeah! We did it!” Lucifer lets out a whoop. His words bring Alastor back, and he finally lets go of his hand, settling it back onto his radio cane.

“Oh, I had no doubt it would go smoothly, once *I* was involved.”

“It’s always about you, isn’t it.” Lucifer scowls. “Can’t you just admit that *someone else* might have been good?”

“Well, I suppose you were adequate. Good boy!” Alastor pats him on the head, and Lucifer sputters at this, shoving his hand off immediately.

“You are seriously the WORST!” Lucifer huffs, and his face is -

it’s definitely red, this time.

(He’s always liked that colour.)

“Your little electricity outage should work for a few days.” Alastor hums, looking at the destroyed power lines in the distance. “Luckily, radios can still work under these circumstances. Truly the superior medium, wouldn’t you say?”

“The radio, huh.” Lucifer mulls over this, before glancing at Alastor. “Hey, uh. Are you ever going to do your radio show again?”

It’s strange that Lucifer asks. Alastor tilts his head, looking at him with confusion. “Oh? Did you miss hearing my broadcast?”

“NAH!” Lucifer shrugs. “Much too boring for me.”

“Is that so?” Alastor narrows his eyes at him. “Well, not everyone can appreciate the finer things in life.”

“You need to work on showmanship, alright? I mean, you’ve put me to *sleep* before!”

Alastor’s vexation level is definitely through the roof at this point.

“Why don’t you come onto my show then? Perhaps you can demonstrate how to entertain, hmm?”

Lucifer looks momentarily surprised at the offer, but then his face twists into a smirk.

“FINE! I’ll show you. Maybe you can pick up some tricks of the trade, huh? Who better to learn from than *me?”*

Alastor lets out a growl at this, and Lucifer’s grin spreads, and spreads, and spreads…

They start making their way back to the hotel, and Alastor can just shift away into shadow to go back home - but for some reason, he doesn't want to. They settle into a comfortable pace, Alastor a little faster, Lucifer a little slower, although the distance is negligible enough that they can still make conversation.

“Hey.” Lucifer calls out. “What’s my compliment today?”

“Oh? Another compliment exchange?” Alastor taunts, but there’s no venom to it. “Well. Let me think about it for a second.”

He reflects on the photos at the ball - Lucifer’s lie - the plan today - “You’re quite quick on your feet.”

Lucifer’s face does something weird, like he’s not sure to be thankful or distrustful. *“Really?* Well, uh. Thanks.”

“And what will you say about me?”

They walk in silence for a bit, and Lucifer looks like he’s pondering deeply, struggling to formulate the words.

And then, quite abruptly, he stops moving. Stands in place. It makes Alastor stop as well, turning around to face him.

“You’re… very cunning.” Lucifer finally says. “Always planning something, always thinking.”

Lucifer looks at him, and he lifts his hand slowly. His fingers approach Alastor’s face at a snail’s pace, giving him lots of time to leave, to dodge, to swat him away.

But Alastor just stands there, watching as his hand comes closer and closer and -

flick!

And Lucifer flicks Alastor’s forehead.

“But you know, you think way too much.” Lucifer grins, watching gleefully as Alastor rubs his forehead from the pain.

“You…” Alastor says roughly. “No one has done that to me, and lived.”

“Well,” and his eyes reflect the stars above, shiny and bright,

“I guess I’m not just anyone.”

Chapter End Notes

Fun Facts:
- The chapter title has two meanings!! Spark (power outage) and *spark* (between Alastor/Lucifer) 👀
- 2nd time Velvette uploaded a photo of them - ch. 5 and ch. 10
- I fully modelled Angel Dust after that Pepe Silvia cork board meme.
- The "friends friending around" parallels to the “pals palling around” from ch. 9
- He met Alastor’s shadow creature for the first time in Ch. 3
- Lucifer watching Alastor's full demon form is a parallel with Alastor liking Lucifer’s full form (ch. 11)
- Alastor has been carrying that duck around since ch. 7
- 3rd time he called him a good boy (ch. 4, 6)
- That's the 2nd time Lucifer has ever said Alastor's name (1st time back in ch. 8)!

We’re finally done Act 2: becoming friends (Ch. 4 - 12) Ch. 13 is gonna officially kick off Act 3, any guesses on what’s gonna happen? Please leave your theories/suggestions in the comments below <3

The Broadcast

Chapter Notes

CH. 13 FANART:
- comic by: @nemuiemi
- drawn by: @Simphony_Da_Kat
- drawn by @dirtgrubber: 1 + 2
- drawn by @art-eat3r
- drawn by: @kayray-amazing12345

My Tumblr: @morningstarwrites + My Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lights: out

Hotel staff: together.

For the past few nights, they've been meeting up to chat in the music room. It also helps that they've been rather strapped for recreational activities, what with the lack of… everything. Who knew that electricity was responsible for so much?

Most of the seats are taken when Lucifer enters the room. Angel Dust and Husk are lounging in individual armchairs; Charlie's sharing the long couch with Vaggie, but there's still a spot beside her.

And to her left, Alastor is on a small sofa, with Niffty sprawled on his shoulders like a cat. Potentially a spot, more likely a tight squeeze, if he's being honest.

So now he has to think about where to sit, based on difficulty levels:

The spot next to Charlie **(EASY)**
Standing in the corner **(MEDIUM)**
Squeeze in beside Alastor **(HARD)**

Like an idiot, he chooses an option that wasn't even available in the first place -

the edge of the *armrest* of Alastor's sofa. He tries to balance, it looks exceedingly unnatural, annnnnnd now it's way too late to back out of his decision. Charlie shoots him a perplexed look, but refrains from commenting on it.

"I wonder why the power went out." She says instead, looking around the music room. They've placed about a million candles around the area, the flames flickering cozily in the darkness.

“Oh, huh! I wonder why?” Lucifer laughs awkwardly. Alastor doesn’t bother chiming in. Neither of them have mentioned to anyone that they were the culprits of this power outage.

Speaking of other things left unsaid:

Lucifer hasn’t divulged to Charlie that they had concluded their promise, nor that they had become friends. He’s not intentionally hiding it - just, he hasn’t had the time to bring it up. Or a reason to, really.

And.

It’s not like Alastor was running around the hotel, casting sweeping declarations of friendship, *god.* But the thought of that makes Lucifer snort for a second, enough of a noise that Alastor casts a curious glance over to him.

“I’m so booooooored.” Angel Dust groans. “No internet? No TV? What the hell are we supposed to do, then?”

“Why, the radio is always available!” Alastor snaps his fingers, and the radio sputters to life, playing dulcet jazz tunes that float through the air.

“Alastor. Only you enjoy that.” Despite this, Vaggie ventures over to the radio and starts to fiddle with the dial, trying to see what other channels were available.

“That’s not true! I LIKE IT!” Niffty pipes in. “And so does the king!”

And suddenly, Lucifer becomes the recipient of Angel Dust’s Very Pointed Stare.

“You like listening to the *radio,* king?”

“Uh…” He swallows, and sweats a bit under Angel Dust’s accusatory words. “Well, it’s. Fine. You know, I don’t listen to it all that much.”

“Oh, don’t be so modest.” Alastor croons. “In fact, he is *such* a fan that he’s joining my program!”

“Really?” Charlie gasps. “That’s wonderful! When will you be on air?”

“We will take advantage of the power outage and start it up soon.” Alastor says. “Perhaps in the next few days, hmm?”

Angel Dust shares a very purposeful look with Husk before leaning in, his smile nefarious.

“Hey, here’s an idea. Why don’t you take Niffty with ya? Since she’s also your loyal listener.”

Alastor pauses at this. “As *exciting* as that sounds, I’m-”

“YES! I want to!” Niffty shrieks, pulling at Alastor’s hair. Alastor’s eye twitches, and he removes her from his head with one hand.

“Niffty, my dear. I… can’t think of a reason why you shouldn’t come.” Alastor stares at her, watching as she continues to vibrate with excitement. He glances over at Lucifer, his expression deliberately composed. “Unless *you* can?”

He’s a bit caught off-guard at the question. Lucifer looks down at him, trying to see what he’s thinking, but Alastor’s in one of those moods where he’s completely unreadable. Like a book written in another language.

“Oh! I mean… if she wants to… whyyyyyyy not?” He says carefully, watching as Alastor’s deer ears flatten, and Lucifer feels like he’s said the wrong thing, somehow.

“YAY!” Niffty climbs across the sofa, clambers onto Lucifer’s lap -

- and Alastor immediately yanks her off.

It’s a bit startling, the sheer speed at which he pulls her away, and Niffty looks put-out by the action. “What was that for?”

Alastor’s smile freezes on his face, but then he pushes her back onto his shoulders. “Now, now, Niffty. Where are your manners?”

Lucifer watches the whole exchange with some bewilderment, but he gets distracted when Vaggie flicks the dial. She switches to a channel that plays polka music, the melody lively and brisk. “Wait! Maggie, stay on this for now.”

“What are we listening to?” Vaggie asks.

“Polka!” Lucifer hums with the melody, and he’s seized with the urge to dance - but he abstains, for now. “Now this? *This* is good. This is music.”

They all sit in silence to listen, Lucifer tapping his hands on his knees to the beat, Alastor observing him from the corner of his eyes.

After they all leave the music room, Angel Dust grabs Niffty by the nape of her neck and brings her to his face.

“Hey, Niffty. Can ya keep an eye on Alastor and Lucifer for me? Maybe let me know after the show what you all did? I'll be listening too, but I want you as my eyes over there.”

Niffty cocks her head to the side, smiling at him with confusion.

“Why?”

“Uh.” Angel Dust looks away shiftily, thinking about what to say. “Y’know. Just don’t want them to fight, or anything.”

“Sure!” Niffty nods her head vigorously. “But I don’t think they’re fighting.”

“What are they doing, then?” Angel Dust asks.

“Whatever bad boys like to do together.” Niffty says cheerily. Angel Dust looks at her with thinly-veiled exasperation.

“Just - report back to me afterwards, got it?”

Niffty salutes him.

“No problem!”

So, guess what?

Lucifer made the rubber duck.

He spent quite a bit of time on it. Much longer than he’d liked to admit, actually, and after a few nights of conceptualizing, he decided that the best - the most unique - the funniest design - would be, definitely, an Alastor-shaped duck. Since Lucifer’s already given him a duck that looked like himself, so.

1 Lucifer duck, 1 Alastor duck. Hilarious, right?

Wrong.

God *dammit.*

It was supposed to be *funny,* but Lucifer is appalled by how much detail he put into it. Red monocle, red eyes, the way his hair is parted the deer ears that stick up the little bowtie with the matching jacket and it's even got a little radio cane attachment because why the fuck not -

- and he puts it back down onto his desk.

Creating rubber ducks has always been fun. At the height of his depression, the strangely soothing action of mass production helped distract him from his worries-fears-concerns-anxiety, clearing his mind for a while by focusing on a singular task.

Now, he makes them more as a casual hobby. It's something he's rather proud of, actually, because at this point, he's probably the best at making rubber ducks in all of Hell, right?

But he can't quite steel himself to give the duck to Alastor. Maybe later.

Still, it's been a few days since they've met up, one-on-one. After the V Tower, Alastor spent most of his time either in his room or in his radio tower - not to host his show, Lucifer's checked the radio already - but presumably just to… brood, maybe?

What is he up to, Lucifer thinks. He stares at Alastor's belongings, which now includes the tattered red overcoat he had made for the ball, draped over a chair. He reaches for the sleeve idly before looking down at his hand, thinking about the moment at the portal,

how his heart stopped when Alastor didn't make a move,

and how it beat again once he held Lucifer's hand.

"Okay." Lucifer lets out a deep breath. "I'm gonna look for him."

He teleports before he can second-guess himself.

It's the first time Lucifer has ever dropped by his room.

When he knocks on the door, Alastor swings it open, eyebrows raised in surprise when he sees that it's Lucifer standing in front of him.

“See, that’s called knocking.” Lucifer mocks. “That’s what people normally do with doors, instead of showing up in someone’s room at 5 in the morning.”

“Oh, my morning arrivals really helped you with your punctuality, don’t you think?” Alastor smiles sardonically. “You were never late for your shift. You should be thanking me!”

“Thank you? All you did was make me tired as hell.”

“Tired already? Heavens. Your work ethic leaves much to be desired.”

“I literally *rebuilt* this place!”

“Hmm. If that’s how you want to see it.” Alastor leans on his radio staff. “And to what do I owe this pleasure? Back for more of me?”

“Uh…” and Lucifer doesn’t know how to say it. *We haven’t talked much, so I was wondering what you’re doing?* What kind of ridiculous thing to admit is *that?* “I’m here because… the radio show. What are we doing?”

Alastor taps his chin in thought. “Ah, yes! We should really plan for that. Come in for a second.”

Lucifer steps inside his room, which is half-swamp, half-bedroom, for some reason. Instead of commenting on it, he gingerly takes a seat in an armchair, and Alastor sits down across from him. They're both seated in front of the green fireplace, the fire tinging everything in an emerald glow.

“Have you been on radio before?” Alastor asks, lacing his fingers together.

“Well… no. Y’know, I’ve mostly been at home. After. Everything?”

Everything being the banishment from Heaven and the subsequent aftermath of Hell, but whatever.

“Oh, it is quite an elegant structure. I used to broadcast the screams of tortured souls!” Alastor sounds much too cheerful about this. “But I also hosted talk radio. We’ll just chat amongst each other, have a little interview, and we’ll finish up with some music.”

Lucifer’s starting to feel a little nervous. “Oh, no no no no. An interview? With who - ME?”

“You are rather self-centred, aren’t you?” Alastor smirks, and Lucifer scowls back at him. “We’ll interview Niffty. She is much more amusing than you are, wouldn’t you say?”

“Out of the three of us?” Lucifer leans back on his chair. “You know, I’d put you dead-last on that list. Least interesting: the radio demon!”

Alastor seems insulted, if the twitching of his smile was any indication. “I’m known for being quite the source of entertainment. But *you?* I haven’t heard about you at all!”

Lucifer lets out a grumble, unable to come up with a retort, and Alastor smiles wider at his silence.

“So then! We shall meet in a few days.”

Lucifer looks over at Alastor,

but he’s not looking back.

Instead, his eyes are fixed onto the fireplace, and it reminds Lucifer of the other day, the way Alastor had stared into the burning mess at V Tower, like his mind was a million miles away. He leans in a bit closer and nervously wrings his hands together, wanting to know but also unwilling to find out.

“Did you have a question?” Alastor asks.

(It’s unsettling how observant he can be.)

“Sort of.” Lucifer exhales. “You… the other day.”

His words come out tentatively; just a handful of short phrases.

“With Vox. What exactly happened? With you two.”

Lucifer pauses.

“With… everything.”

Alastor wrenches his eyes away from the flames, and looks at him searchingly. There's a guarded expression on his face, and he places his chin in his hand, tone faux-pleasant when he says:

“How curious. Why do you wish to know, when it doesn’t concern you in any way?”

It shouldn’t sting, but it does.

Alastor has always been cagey with his past. It’s part of his mystery, the enigmatic persona that he’s built up so painstakingly in Hell, and Lucifer knows that already - knows that there are some aspects about Alastor that he doesn’t-won’t-*can’t* understand, but,

even so,

he finds that he wants to.

“Okay.” Lucifer replies stiffly. He feels conflicted, and everything is - now there’s - his emotions are all contorted inside of him,

t
w
i

s
t
i
n
g

this way and that, impossible to untie. “You’re right. So. I’ll leave you alone, then.”

And Lucifer can hear something embarrassingly raw in his voice - a pinch of dejection, a dash of melancholy, and a heaping portion of hurt.

“You’re leaving?” Alastor’s radio filter slips off for a second, enough that bewilderment comes through. “When we’re in the middle of a conversation?”

“Well, I’m ending it.” Lucifer looks away pointedly from him, and his chair scrapes angrily against the floor when he stands up,

krrrrrrrk.

“Now, now. Surely you’re not serious?”

There’s something else in Alastor’s voice.

(A bit of desperation?)

Lucifer doesn’t respond - heads over to the door - Alastor’s footsteps follow after him - “Are you *ignoring* me?”

“No,” except Lucifer is lying, *of course* he's ignoring him, and Alastor walks faster until he catches up. When Lucifer grabs the doorknob, Alastor slams his hand against the frame to prevent him from leaving.

“Don’t you know it’s impolite to leave without saying goodbye?” His voice dips into radio static, a little threatening, a lot annoyed, and Lucifer whirls around to face him.

“Oh, god. You’re always *so* clever, aren’t you? Always trying to get the last FUCKING word - ”

And then Alastor yanks Lucifer’s chin with one hand, forcing him to look up. “Oh, *Lucifer.* You talk a big game, when you can’t even look at me.”

And he -

Lucifer swallows nervously,

“YES-I-CAN,”

but he’s distracted by the feeling of Alastor’s large hand clasping his chin, the firm but careful way he holds him in his palm, like he’s trying his best not to hurt him. And now, Lucifer feels all twisted up in a different way.

Alastor looks searchingly across his face, before heaving out a sigh, as though in defeat. “I don’t relish talking about my past. What is the fun in reminiscing about times gone by? But this whole *Vox* situation is starting to irritate me.”

“Uh… er… what?”

He's - not fully paying attention.

He admits it.

He’s too preoccupied on the feeling of Alastor’s hand on his face, how he’s still gripping onto him, how he even pulls him a bit closer, actually, and he can see the way Alastor’s eyelashes cast shadows on his cheekbones.

“If you must know about… what happened at the Tower, I was reflecting on how he and I were never on the same page.”

“Huhhh.” Lucifer’s having a hard time comprehending, brain slowly grinding down to a halt.

And the twisting inside of him is officially a chaotic, tangled mess.

“You should know that the radio was quite popular back in the day. And Vox’s dream was to merge every technological medium together, with him as the head.” Alastor finally lets go of him, but he doesn’t move away.

Neither does Lucifer.

“He wanted to be in control. *I* wanted to be in control. And I value freedom over anything. So I turned him down, and the rest is, as they say, history. I suppose if we did team up, we would have taken over the entirety of Hell by now, but what’s the fun in doing that if someone else is commanding me behind the scenes?”

Alastor waits for Lucifer to respond, but he merely leans back against the door, feeling a bit sheepish by the whole thing. Embarrassed by the way he was about to storm off. Really, was he a kid or something?

“Okay.” Lucifer says abashedly. “Uh. I didn’t mean to make you tell me - ”

“Make me?” Alastor echoes. “Hilarious! You are incapable of forcing me to do something I don’t want to do.”

Lucifer’s not sure if that was a compliment or an insult.

“Is that… a good thing?”

“Hmm. Let’s just say that you lack a certain gift for manipulation.”

“That’s great.”

“And now it’s your turn.”

“Huh?”

Alastor lets out a displeased sigh. “What did you and Vox talk about at the ball?”

“Oh. That.”

Truthfully, Lucifer doesn’t even care about Vox right now. In fact, he’d be happy to never talk about him ever again. “He just said you were going to leave. When you’re bored. He really, really didn’t say all that much.”

“Well.” Alastor places his hand onto his radio staff. “Is that so?”

Lucifer waits for him to finish his thought, recognizing the way Alastor looks when he’s mulling over something.

And then he says something unexpected:

“I am rather offended!”

Lucifer blinks at this. “What? Why?”

“It seems as though you took Vox’s words to heart.”

“Hold up - that is *not* what happened,” he denies it, *hard,* but Alastor shakes his head anyway.

“When I make a commitment, I always follow through.” Alastor continues. “Be it with deals, or with connections.”

He leans down, his face so close that his hair ends up tickling Lucifer’s nose. “And we’re friends now! Isn’t that what *you* said?”

“What *we* said,” Lucifer corrects him, and Alastor flashes a fiendish grin, teasing yet menacing,

“So I’m afraid there is no getting off of this ride now.”

And Lucifer -

he has to cough violently to stop the smile from spreading on his face. It’s gratifying to hear Alastor speak so resolutely, reassuring him that he’ll stay for the long-haul. Okay? He owns up to it.

“Although, one can argue that you are too short to ride, ha-HA!”

Alastor cackles, and any sort of fuzzy feelings Lucifer has disappears immediately.

It’s the day of their scheduled radio broadcast, and Alastor has to confess:

he’s been looking forward to it. Radio has always been an enjoyable medium for him, something that he holds near and dear to his heart, both in life and death.

They settle in the radio tower with Niffty in between them, and she’s standing on her chair to reach the microphone. Lucifer flips through the script that Alastor had prepared, concentrating on what he’s going to say.

“I’M READY!” Niffty claps her hands with excitement. Lucifer puts his script down nervously, but he’s clearly trying to put on a brave face.

“Oh, golly. I guess I am too?”

“Have a little fun with it!” Alastor says to them, but he’s mostly directing it to Lucifer. “It’s really quite straightforward.”

When he presses the **ON** button, everything gets bathed in red, and he leans in to the microphone to speak.

“Welcome back to my radio broadcast!” Alastor says cheerily. "We have a special guest today. Niffty, from the Hazbin Hotel! And I have also invited a fan onto the show. A little *nobody* named Lucifer. You could even call him my unpaid intern, ha-ha-HA!”

“Ha-ha-HA.” Lucifer returns the laugh. “You only got us to join your show because we work together. Otherwise, who would even come here?”

Alastor’s smile twitches. “As always, you are quite wrong.”

“Oh, *am I?”*

“You *certainly* are.”

“And I’m Niffty!” Niffty cuts in, speaking into the microphone. “What are we doing today?”

“Well, my dear.” Alastor flips through his script. “Today we will conduct a short questionnaire with you.”

“OKAY! Lay it on me!”

“So, then.” Alastor shoots Lucifer a shit-eating grin. *“Lucifer* here says that he’s more entertaining than I am. But I have my doubts! Niffty, who do you think is more fun?”

“Ooh! Is it up to me?” She brightens up. “I think Alastor is more fun!”

“Wait a seco- this is RIGGED!” Lucifer protests hotly. “You’ve known each other for longer!”

“Well, Alastor thinks you’re fun, sir.” Niffty says, *the traitor,* and Alastor freezes at this.

“I don’t think so! When did I possibly say that?”

“You told me that he’s a good way to pass the time!” Niffty chimes in, and Alastor thinks back, way, *way* back, and unfortunately, he did mention it once. Right when they first started their deal.

“Oh?” Lucifer looks insufferably smug. “Wow! I guess *you* think *I’m* more fun, then?”

“Now, now.” Alastor sidesteps the question. “Let’s not get too ahead of ourselves here. We’ll move on! Niffty - who is your favourite coworker?”

“ALASTOR!” Niffty jumps over to give him a hug, and he returns it enthusiastically.

“This is such a set-up.” Lucifer groans. “I don’t know what else I expected.”

“You agree with me, right, king?” Niffty asks, and Lucifer splutters at this. “You missed him so much when he left!”

“I did not MISS HIM!” Lucifer growls indignantly. “I - okay, I asked you *once* where he went. That’s *it.”*

“How very touching. My absence must have been quite difficult on you.” Alastor taunts.

“Actually, I could finally hear myself think when you were gone!” Lucifer throws back, and they both glower at each other.

For the rest of the broadcast, they take turns asking Niffty questions. Alastor doesn’t normally have other people with him on his show (exceptions made for torturing purposes), but it’s not a terrible experience to have someone else to speak with.

One may even say it’s rather… ~~enjoyable~~

acceptable.

They’ve been at it for an hour at this point, and even Niffty is starting to look fatigued, so Alastor makes the executive decision to wrap up the show.

“We will be ending the broadcast now.” Alastor speaks into the microphone. “Thanks for listening! I’ll be back… eventually. Stay tuned.”

He presses the **OFF** button, and turns to the two of them. “Well now! Not bad for both of your first times. Why don’t you pick out a song to play us out?”

“Ooh! OOH!” Niffty squeals. “Hey, king - what song did you play at the music room? It was all like, fast and stuff!”

“The polka?” Lucifer sounds rather excited at the suggestion. “You wanna hear it again?”

“YEAH!”

“If that’s what your little heart desires, Niffty.” Alastor conjures up a phonograph, and he places down an antique record. The sound of the accordion starts to drift through the air, cheerful and upbeat.

“Oh! Man, I love this song.” Lucifer gets up and starts dancing in place, a 4 step count, and Alastor suddenly remembers when they danced together at the ball - the way Lucifer removed his hand, and he had to chase after him-

His throat feels tight when he thinks about it. Constricted, as though someone were strangling him.

But… Lucifer looks quite at peace, blissfully moving to the beat of the music, which makes Alastor grapple with a singular choice.

Shall I have him teach me the polka? Alastor thinks. Watches him carefully as he dances. Knows that Lucifer wouldn’t turn him down, anyway, so why not learn a new dance style?

And as he opens his mouth -

“TEACH ME HOW TO DANCE!”

Niffty beats him to the punch.

She jumps off her seat and crawls up his leg, making Lucifer stop in his tracks.

“Sure, if you want!” Lucifer looks genuinely delighted, and he plucks her off his leg. They spin together, stepping to the beat of the music. “So, make sure to keep your knees bent, and you’re gonna want to match the tempo. Think you can handle it?”

“Of course!” Niffty shrieks. They move quick-quick-quick, and Alastor…

he sits there, brimming with barely-disguised contempt,

and he feels like he’s steadily losing control.

It’s not ideal. Something about Lucifer always makes his emotions flare up uncontrollably, and it’s hard to get a handle on his thoughts. Honestly, wasn’t becoming his friend supposed to ease this awful longing, the desire to be close by? Yet the close proximity actually seems to exacerbate the problem.

Like a festering wound he keeps prodding at.

Alastor looks down at his hand, flexes his fingers, recalls how he grabbed onto Lucifer's hand. How he pulled him through the portal. How they continued to hold each other, for just a moment longer.

He digs his claws in, trying but failing to kill the craving - he still wants it - yearns for it - he misses the feeling, somehow, and now he's officially nauseated.

The song ends and skips to the next one on the album. Niffty and Lucifer both bow to each other, and she claps her hands excitedly.

"AGAIN!" She says,

and Alastor,

for the first time in a long time,

speaks without thinking first.

"Lucifer." Alastor says tersely. "Summon a portal."

Lucifer looks rather surprised, but he still does it, albeit with some annoyance. "Always telling me to do this and that."

With one smooth motion, Alastor picks up Niffty and tosses her through.

"Thanks for joining the broadcast!" He calls out blithely. "Now close it."

Lucifer does so obligingly, but he looks at him with some concern afterwards. "Why'd you want Niffty to leave?"

It's a reasonable question, but Alastor doesn't want to answer it.

Instead, he runs his hands through his hair - pushes his deer ears down - drags his fingers all the way down onto his neck. He's trying to buy himself some time, and Lucifer watches the whole thing interestedly, the weight of his golden eyes heavy and intense.

"Well." Alastor grits out of his teeth, syllable by syllable. "This is polka music."

"Uh huh."

"You seem to have forgotten something."

"What?" Lucifer asks.

"Didn't you say…" Alastor peeks at him from the corner of his eyes, "that you will show me what *real* dancing is like?"

Lucifer blinks in confusion, but then his face clears up. "Oh! From… the ball?"

“Indeed.” It’s hard getting the words out of his mouth. “Won’t you prove to me who is the better dancer, once and for all?”

“You want a dance-off, or something?” Lucifer asks, and Alastor is seriously about to blow a gasket.

“Are you being *deliberately* obtuse?!” Alastor snaps.

breathes in.

and…

out.

“What I mean to say is…” Alastor tries again, with some difficulty. “Show me how to dance the polka.”

“Oh.” At last, Lucifer registers what he’s saying, and his eyes sparkle with interest. “Yeah. *Hell* yeah!”

Before they begin, Alastor conjures up a hair ribbon to pull his hair into a ponytail, preferring to keep his hair out of his eyes when he’s dancing.

In the midst of tying it back, he can feel Lucifer gazing at him, almost transfixed by the action. Alastor suddenly recalls his compliment - *you should tie your hair in a ponytail more often* - and he tenses up at the intrusive memory.

“What is it?” Alastor glances at him, and Lucifer looks a bit caught.

“Just - waiting for you. You sure take a while.”

“Patience is a virtue. Shouldn’t a saintly being like you practice it?”

“Nah. You’re talking to one of the Seven Deadly Sins here.”

Eventually, they stand in front of each other. The music transitions to a waltz-like polka, *one-two-three,* and Lucifer offers a hand out to him.

Which Alastor accepts immediately.

This time, Lucifer leads, one hand on Alastor's waist, whereas he has his hand on Lucifer's back. It's a fast dance - Lucifer coaxes him to hop to the beat, and they're twirling and twirling and twirling…

"You picked it up quickly." Lucifer sounds annoyed.

"I've always been a fast learner!" Alastor sings. He decides to throw a bone towards Lucifer. "I *suppose* you are an adequate teacher."

Lucifer rolls his eyes, but there's a smile tugging at his lips as they continue to whirl around inside of the radio tower.

It's a cramped space. Unsuitable for dancing, really, although Lucifer expertly navigates the room, pulling Alastor into his space whenever he needs to. His every move is confident, effortless, and he swings Alastor with a strength that is always so at odds with his small frame.

It's when they've been dancing for a while that Alastor's hair ribbon slips off,

fluttering

in

the

air

and Lucifer catches it, with one hand. He initially offers it back to him, but when Alastor holds his hand out, he yanks it just out of reach.

"If this is your idea of a joke, it's not very funny." Alastor says threateningly.

"Um." And Lucifer glances between

Alastor,

the ribbon,

back to Alastor,

the ribbon again…

"You didn't tie it well." Lucifer sounds hesitant. "I used to tie Charlie's hair all the time. I can tie it tighter... if you want?"

It's a rather innocent offer. Easy enough to turn down.

But the idea of Lucifer's hands in his hair is setting off multiple points of interest inside him, swirling so arrestingly that he just can't bring himself to decline. When he doesn't respond

immediately, Lucifer clenches the ribbon tighter, as though regretting, and Alastor -

flick!

he flicks his forehead.

“OW!” Lucifer winces, rubbing at it. “What was that for?”

“You think too much.” Alastor mocks, repeating exactly what Lucifer said just a few nights ago. He sits down in front of Lucifer, crossing his legs, back towards him.

“If you insist on tying it, do it well.”

“Always a critic.” Lucifer mutters, but he does lean in closer.

It’s after a beat that he feels the gentle pressure of his hands, warm and careful. He slowly rakes his fingers to comb through the strands first, detangling any knots, and the movement is unexpectedly relaxing against his scalp.

“Your hair is really soft.” Lucifer says quietly.

And Alastor… doesn’t know how to respond to that.

So he doesn’t.

Not audibly, at least. He lets out a noncommittal hum, and Lucifer takes it as a confirmation to continue pulling his hair back, arranging it into a low ponytail. It’s not a particularly difficult task, so he ties everything back quite quickly, securing it in place with his hair ribbon.

Alastor doesn’t hear anything, but he can still feel Lucifer’s hands idly combing through his hair.

Almost like he’s playing with the ends.

“Are you quite finished?” Alastor asks. It seems to jolt Lucifer into action, and he hastily drops his hands to his side.

“See?” Lucifer’s voice sounds thick. Inscrutable. An unrecognizable emotion. “Much better.”

While Angel Dust is drinking away with Husk at his bar, he spies Niffty at the parlour, busily dusting the fireplace.

“Hey!” Angel Dust grabs Husk’s arm to get his attention. “Look! Niffty’s back. Let’s ask how it went down.”

Husk groans at this. “Don’t tell me you *actually* asked her to be your spy.”

“Of course I did! But y’know what, I’m not sure if she really understood.”

Husk shoots him an unimpressed stare, but he follows after Angel Dust anyway, the two of them towering over her.

“Hey, Tiny! How was it?” Angel Dust asks. Niffty pauses dusting to look up at him, blinking her one eye in confusion.

“How was what?”

Angel Dust almost snaps his pen from frustration.

“The SHOW, Niff. How was the *radio* show.”

“Oh! That?” Niffty shrugs. “Mm, they just fought the whole time.”

It’s not the kind of scandalous information Angel Dust was hoping for. He sighs, starts to put his notebook away, and then Niffty opens her mouth -

“But Alastor kicked me out. They’re still at the tower together.”

Angel Dust perks up at this.

“Really? Why?”

“I dunno.” Niffty shrugs again, and Angel Dust squints at her.

“Niffty, this is not what a spy is supposed to do.” He says exasperatedly. “What the hell were you even doing there?”

“I danced with the royal bad boy!” Niffty says cheerfully. “But Alastor looked angry. Really, really angry.”

“Did he?” Angel Dust’s interest is piqued again. “Cuz you were dancin’ with Lucifer?”

“I dunno.” Niffty shrugs, AGAIN, and Angel Dust slaps his hand onto his face.

“You know what? I’ll count that. I’ll count that anyways.” Angel Dust mutters, jotting it down onto his notebook.

In the beautiful backdrop of Heaven, Lute angrily follows after Sera, her eyes burning with hatred.

“Your highness, please!” Lute shouts. “Let me go down to Hell and destroy those Hell spawn. I need to stop their uprising - I need to avenge *Adam -”*

Sera glares at her, silencing her with a single look. “You will not go down there. Do you understand? Your yearly activities created this whole mess. And if you disobey me, there will be a price to pay.”

Lute grits her teeth. “But who knows what they’ll do next if we don’t - ”

“YOU ARE FORBIDDEN.”

Lute recoils at her harsh words, but she still gives a terse nod.

“Understood. Forgive me, your highness.”

Lute exits the room, carefully shutting the door behind her, and when she’s certain that no one’s around she lets out a scream.

“AGH!” Lute shakes with outrage. “I'm going to find a way down there no matter what. I’ll locate that little *filth* who killed you, sir. And I’m going to fucking rip her to pieces.”

Chapter End Notes

Random but this fic is reaching its 2 month anniversary, my god! Thank you everyone for being here, I am infinitely grateful for your presence. It’s been an absolute delight,

and I especially love hearing your fic analysis, seeing fanart, discussing about radioapple together, everything! <3

Fun Facts:
- Alastor pulled Niffty off of Lucifer as well in ch. 9
- Lucifer mentioned polka dancing in ch. 10
- Alastor ambushed Lucifer at 5 am in ch. 2 and ch. 5
- Vox and Lucifer talked about Alastor in ch. 10
- Niffty was referencing scenes from ch. 3 and ch. 8 (Alastor saying Lucifer is fun, Lucifer missing Alastor).
- Lucifer has wanted to tie his hair since ch. 11!
- I already mentioned what was gonna happen in Act 3, right in my summary: — *in which they fight heaven, each other, and the urge to be together.* So this will be heaven related.

Let me know your theories/suggestions below! See you next Friday <3

The Moon

Chapter Notes

CH. 14 FANART:
- drawn by @dirtgrubber
- drawn by @nerdynuala
- drawn by @twosoulss77
- drawn by @vizzicola
- drawn by @otsmosis
- drawn by @mintychocoice/@mintyave: 1 + 2
- drawn by @pasteldo
- ceramic duck creations by @DarkXJellyfish

If you'd like to send me anything, you can find me on tumblr: @morningstarwrites or on twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hey, that’s Lucifer!”

Lucifer turns around at the sound of his name. He’s out on an errand with Charlie and Vaggie, and they all stop in their tracks, watching as a demon runs up while waving a picture in the air.

“Can you sign this for me? I wanted to ask you at the masquerade ball, but the lineup for your autograph was too long.”

Before he can respond, the demon shoves a pen and a picture in front of his face:

it’s of him and Alastor at the Consent Club, lit up in neon colours from the strobe lights. They’re standing against the wall together, just moments before they slipped away to fight in the alleyway.

“Oh.” Lucifer laughs awkwardly. “Sure, sure.”

As he’s signing her picture, Vaggie and Charlie peer at it as well.

“Do you just… carry that around with you?” Vaggie asks suspiciously. The demon holds up her hands, as though to surrender.

“What can I say? I like to look at eye candy. And speaking of, your highness, if you’re ever free, *my* backdoor is always open.” She winks lasciviously, and he hurriedly hands the picture back to her.

“Thank you for your very generous, um, offer, but I’m kind of tied up right now. And later as well. You know what? I’m busy forever.”

“Well, if you get tired of your little boy toy,” she writes her phone number on his hand before he can stop her, “you can call me here. Bye!”

It’s when she’s already left that Lucifer registers what she said.

“Wait - boy toy? WHO?”

“Don’t listen to her, dad. She probably just wants to get some sort of reaction from you.” Charlie tries to rub the phone number off of his hand, but the permanent marker is impossible to wipe off. “Uh oh. I think this’ll come off in a few days.”

Lucifer looks at the digits, signed with an *xoxo* at the end. “Well, I’ll live. More importantly! Charlie, dear, what’s next on your list of things to buy?”

“Right!” Charlie says brightly. “Let’s go this way.”

They make their way towards a row of quaint little shops; the electricity has fully returned, and the whole town is abuzz with TV broadcasts on every display. After they’ve been shopping for a while, something catches Lucifer’s eye:

the familiar sight of the little red radio in the storefront.

Except this time, it’s at a deeper discount, marked *80% OFF,* and he stares at it for a while. Way longer than he realizes, because Charlie has to shake him to get his attention.

“Dad, what’s up? Something wrong?”

He looks back at the radio, the glossy surface gleaming under the sun, and he reflects on the first time he saw it. It had reminded him of Alastor - *still* reminds him of Alastor, actually, present tense, and he kind of wants to…

“Nothing’s wrong.” Lucifer starts to make his way into the shop. “I’m just - gonna hop in here! I’ll be right back.”

He pushes the door open, hears the little bell ring out his arrival, and he inspects the radio from up-close. It’s nice and compact, small enough that he can just keep it in his room. It’s just… should he get it?

“Ooh, a radio!”

Lucifer is startled to hear Charlie, who had trailed in after him. “Charlie! Wha- what are you doing in here?”

She looks at him in confusion. “Huh? We’re shopping together, right? And the little knick-knacks here look so cool!”

She grabs a ribbon from the display and places it against Vaggie's hair. "Oh. My. GOD! Vaggie, you look beautiful with this. We should get it!"

"Do you think so?" Vaggie looks at herself in the mirror, and she blushes when Charlie nods her head enthusiastically. "Okay. Thank you, hon."

"So let's get this and…" Charlie looks back at the radio. "Do you want to buy that, dad?"

"HUH, WHAT?" Lucifer laughs awkwardly, yanking at his shirt collar. "Um. The radio? Why would I - well - "

He pauses to stare at it, all alone in the window display, discounted after months of collecting dust. Old-fashioned but still elegant. The colour so red it's hard to look away. He picks it up in his hands, and he runs a gentle finger across the candy-apple surface.

"Yeah." Lucifer finally acquiesces. "I want it."

Alastor has a pick-up slip for Rosie's Emporium in his hands. It's one of those days where Charlie requires everyone to lend a hand, but he doesn't really mind; any excuse to meet up with Rosie is a good one, in his opinion.

"Rosie!" He says cheerfully, and she immediately perks up at the sound of his voice.

"Alastor!" Rosie cries out, and she turns to her customer at the counter. "Sorry darling, the shop is closed now."

"Huh?" The demon blinks at this. "But the hours clearly list -"

"We're closed!" Rosie shoos her out through the door. After she flips the sign to say **CLOSED**, she turns around to beam at him.

"What brings you in today?" She asks, and Alastor hands her the form.

"Oh, just picking up a little something for Charlie."

"Charlie! I do miss that girl." Rosie motions for Alastor to follow her. "Come with me and we'll find it together."

They make their way into the backroom, and Rosie sifts through the racks of clothes, pulling out dress after dress to fulfill the order.

“So, how’ve you been?” She lowers her voice covertly. “I know it must have been tough on you. How’s your… deal?”

Alastor hasn’t contacted Rosie since the night of the ball, and he leans on his radio staff, deliberating over the best way to summarize everything.

“We’ve concluded it.” Alastor settles on saying, and Rosie looks at him with surprise.

“Really? How ’bout that!” She carefully zips up all the dresses into one bag. “Well. Did you end up killing Lucifer?”

Alastor laughs heartily at this. “Ha-HA! I certainly *tried* to!”

“Alastor, no. Tell me you didn’t.”

Rosie’s tone is full of admonishment, and he shrugs nonchalantly, his smile resigned.

“Unfortunately, I failed.”

He hesitates to say the next part, because he just knows that Rosie is going to shoot him some sort of smug I-Told-You-So Look.

“And now we’re… friends.”

Right on cue, Rosie sends him the Look.[1]

[1] It’s accompanied by some genuine excitement.

“Alastor!” Rosie sweeps his hands up into hers. “Why don’t you lead with that next time?! I knew you could do it if you really put your mind to it.”

“Oh, I’m unable to claim all the credit.” Alastor says. “I was perfectly prepared to never see him again. But he…”

...immobilized me, Alastor thinks.

He’s used to having sinners fear him, apparent in the way they run at the sight of him - cry at his presence - beg for his amnesty. It was enjoyable watching them cower from his sheer power, and an absolute riot to crush their hope under his hand. Everyone wanted Alastor to disappear; no one wanted him to stay.

And Lucifer’s fear at the radio tower was so palpable he could practically taste it.

But it was - different than what he was used to.

He had been afraid that Alastor would *leave.*

It had thrown him for a loop. Lucifer had held onto him so desperately, hands fisting the lapels of his jacket, yelling like he was truly devastated at the thought of his departure. He had sincerely expressed that they were friends, and it was all such a confusing display of emotion, but -

Alastor couldn't take his eyes off of him.

And when they finally held each other…

Fuck.

"He made a compelling argument." Alastor says simply. Rosie tilts her head at this, waiting for him to elaborate, but he never does.

"Well, ain't that something! I'm really, really happy for you, Alastor."

"Rosie, you are making *much* too big of a deal out of this.

"Of course. How silly of me." Rosie looks at him with fond exasperation. "You know what? I would like to meet him again. I'll join you on your way out."

"If that pleases you, then by all means!"

She hands him the garment bag, and they make their way out of the shop.

"Charlie, I think we got everything." Vaggie double-checks the list before nodding. "Yep, it's all here."

"This is wonderful! And we did it so quickly, too. We're really ahead of schedule today." They continue to walk down the streets before turning a corner into the cannibal district. "We can probably head back now. Dad? Can you make a portal?"

"You got it." Lucifer lifts up his hand, preparing to conjure up a golden portal.

“Alastor!” Rosie points in front of them. “Ain’t that Charlie and them over there?”

Alastor follows the direction of her finger, and his eyes land on the unmistakable shape of Lucifer, always standing out against the red backdrop of the city.

“Good eye! It certainly is.” Alastor cackles, shifting away into shadow. “I’m going to give them a little greeting.”

The portal flickers in the air, luminescent under the sunlight. While Lucifer walks towards it, he turns his head to look at Charlie and Vaggie, not paying attention to what’s in front of him.

“Okay, so let’s go back now - AGH!”

He smacks right into a tall red figure and he fumbles over his footing and careens backwards and

he’s falling

and falling

and *falling*

- until a hand shoots out to grab onto his, pulling him up so quickly that he thwacks against someone’s chest.

“Ow!” Lucifer rubs his nose from the pain. Even before he opens his eyes, he has a sneaking suspicion about who it is.

“Looks like I saved you!” Alastor sings. Lucifer looks up, and he can see the roguish smile on his face. “You are welcome.”

“It’s not saving if you’re the one who made me fall in the first place, asshole." Lucifer glowers. "Where did you even come from, anyway?”

“Oh, I was in Cannibal Town. Just assisting Charlie with a little something!” Alastor demonstrates by jostling a garment bag in his left hand.

Although, Lucifer’s kind of distracted by his right hand, because…

Well.

They’re still holding hands.

Alastor’s palm is smooth and warm, and his thumb brushes idly across the back of Lucifer’s hand,

from side, to side,

his every touch leaving tingles on his skin. He’s pretty certain that Alastor isn’t even consciously aware he’s doing it, and he doesn’t necessarily want him to *stop,* so he just… sort of lets him.

But then his eyes snap to the numbers scrawled across Lucifer’s hand.

“What’s this now? A series of digits, accompanied by x’s and o’s. Did someone make a *pass* at you?”

Alastor tightens his grip, his fingers digging into his skin.

“Um.” Something about his relentless stare makes it hard for him to speak. “Weeeeeeeellll…”

Lucifer looks over at Charlie helplessly, and she immediately picks up on his plea.

“Right! This demon came up to us. She had a picture of the two of you, and asked my dad to sign it.”

“She also told him to use her backdoor.” Vaggie adds unhelpfully.

“Vaggie!” Charlie scolds.

“Hmm.” Alastor ponders over this information. “Well, what’s the verdict? Will you be calling her?”

Alastor smiles pleasantly, but it doesn’t quite reach his eyes, and Lucifer has the strangest urge to reassure him.

“What do you think? Absolutely not.” Lucifer insists. Very, very determinedly. "I’m not gonna date some *rando* off the streets.”

“Are you *sure?* After all, you should take what you can get.”

Despite this, Alastor’s deer ears perk up.

“Ooh, are we talking about romance? ” Rosie walks up to them, clearly catching on to the last part of their conversation. “Who’s the lucky person, your highness?”

“NOPE! It’s NOBODY,” Lucifer says hurriedly, “and besides, I’m kind of busy right now. There’s the hotel, for one.”

His eyes sweep over to look at Alastor.

“And - HAH! You know, dealing with this guy is a full time job.”

Lucifer slips out of their handhold to elbow Alastor, who looks down at him peevishly.

“Are you incapable of multitasking? No wonder you do such a poor job at the hotel!”

Alastor jabs a finger onto Lucifer’s chest.

“NOPE. It’s because other people are slacking. And here’s a hint: I’m talking about *you.”*

Lucifer shoves him - Alastor knocks him back - thrust-strike-*hits* each other until Charlie manhandles her way in and pushes them apart forcibly.

“Come on! Didn’t you two promise to get along?” Charlie sounds frantic, and that’s when Lucifer realizes he should probably let her know.

“Oh, that.” He smiles sheepishly. “We actually… finished that whole deal.”

“Oh? Didn’t you say it’s *not* a deal?” Alastor taunts. Before Lucifer can respond, Charlie grabs his shoulders from shock.

“What! When- how- where- and more importantly- WHY didn’t either of you say anything?!”

“I can at least answer the ‘when,’ which was, uh, right after the ball.” Lucifer smiles awkwardly, and Charlie looks a bit offended by this.

“Dad. That was *ages* ago!”

“Oh, dearie.” Rosie says sympathetically. “If it makes you feel any better, Alastor just told me this today.”

They all turn to look at Lucifer and Alastor.

“I know, I know. I’m sorry, Charlie - it just never came up naturally.” Lucifer shrinks under Charlie’s hurt stare. “Anyway! We’re friends now. Right?”

He’s directing this to Alastor, who heaves a sigh, as though it were an awful burden for him to even say it.

“If you insist on putting a label on it, I *suppose* you can say that we are friends.”

“Friends?” Charlie pauses.

Her eyes sparkle.

And a single tear rolls down her cheek.

“Well, if that’s the case, then… AMAZING! I can’t believe it! My dad,” Charlie holds Lucifer’s hand in her right hand, “and my other dad,” she holds Alastor’s hand in her left, “finally getting along!”

“Charlie, please don’t call him that.” Lucifer deadpans.

“Well! Why not?” Alastor chuckles at this. “I have been *quite* the father figure for dear Charlie here.”

To make his point, Alastor jerks Charlie to his side.

“I’m her *actual* dad.”

Lucifer yanks her towards him instead.

“Two heads are better than one!”

Alastor snatches Charlie back-

“OKAY!” Charlie rips her hands out of their grasps. “Friends… right? That’s what you said?”

“Friends.” They respond together. Tersely.

“Well, this is definitely a reason to celebrate.” Charlie practically bounces in place. “Vaggie, stop EVERYTHING - let’s host a party!”

“As wonderful as that sounds, I’m afraid I have prior commitments.” Alastor says dismissively, clearly making up an excuse.

“I didn’t even tell you when it’s going to happen, Alastor.”

“Oh, don’t be such a Susan.” Rosie says, and Alastor bristles at the name. “If the Princess is throwing a party, it’s only right to join in.”

Charlie grabs Rosie's hand, her face brimming with gratitude. “Aw, Rosie! If you’re available, please feel free to join us.”

“How lovely!” Rosie has a playful twinkle in her eye. “Well, I’ll definitely be there, then. Thank you, darling.”

Husk is watching TV with Angel Dust when Charlie returns back to the hotel, and she makes a determined beeline towards them.

“Soooooo, Angel, Husk,” she claps her hands together to get their attention, “you may be wondering, what could Charlie want with us *this* time? But I just wanted to announce that my dad and Alastor have ended their deal, and are officially friends!”

Angel Dust instantly turns the TV off.

“Friends?” He echoes. “Are you bein' serious right now?”

“Yes!” Charlie’s eyes sparkle. “And just like that, the Hazbin Hotel works its magic again. Sinners can be redeemed! And demons can become friends with angels!”

He shares a bewildered look with Husk. “Uhh. I guess that makes *some* sense then. Kind of like those unlikely animal friendship videos.”

“Exactly!” Charlie says cheerfully. “And I thought it would be fun to have a little party to celebrate. Let’s host a casino night!”

“Casino night?” Husk’s cat ears perk up at this. “You’re speakin’ my language.”

"Love the enthusiasm! Okay, so we’ll meet back here for the party, and, Husk, can you help me with decorating? You have the most knowledge on what casinos are like, after all.”

He sighs in defeat, but he does nod. “Sure, princess. I’ll pitch in.”

“Thank you thank you thank you!” Charlie beams. “Okay, I just have some stuff to prepare, so I’ll see you here in a few.”

After Charlie runs off, Angel Dust turns to Husk indignantly. “Can you believe this? After all that, their big secret is that… they’re friends? BOR-ING!”

He lets out a snort, unable to hide his amusement at Angel Dust’s disappointment. “So what now? You’ve been working on this case for a long time.”

“Well. If ya wanna know my professional opinion,” Angel Dust says, “and by professional, I mean as a porn star - ”

“I got it the first time.”

“ - I still think there’s more underneath.” Angel Dust leans his back against the couch. “Neither of ’em are good at acting. At all. They clearly enjoy, just, looking at each other. I saw the way Alastor was staring at Lucifer in the music room. And that radio show! Even though Niffty was absolutely useless as a spy, I did tune in.”

Angel Dust’s shoulders sink a bit. “I mean, they were just arguing, as per usual. But! I’m positive there’s somethin’ there. So…”

He trails off, and Husk feels increasingly concerned about what Angel Dust has up his sleeve.

“What are you gonna do now?”

“Okay, since evidence isn’t just gonna show itself in front of me, I’m gonna take matters into my own hands.

Angel Dust clenches a fist with determination.

“I’m gonna try flirting with one of ’em.”

“WHAT!”

Husk shakes his head - shakes his hands *no* - and to further demonstrate his disapproval, he grabs Angel Dust to shake *him* back and forth.

“Angel. You’ve done a lot of stupid things since we’ve known each other, but this is the worst idea you’ve come up with.”

“Oh, *fuck* you! I think you meant to say the ‘best’ idea.”

“I can’t see this ending well for you at all. I mean, flirting with Lucifer - flirting with *Alastor?* You have a death wish or something?”

“Ugh, I know. Neither of them are easy to go after.” Angel Dust looks rather grim at the prospect. “Lucifer’s oblivious as hell, and Alastor will probably try to gut me. So… I guess, between the two of them, Lucifer might be a little bit better.”

“You can’t seriously be planning this.”

Angel Dust pulls Husk into a one-armed hug. “Aw, don’t be mad, baby. You’re still my number one guy.”

“I ain’t worried about that.” Husk grumbles, but he still leans in to Angel Dust’s embrace. “What I’m concerned about is you messing around with Alastor. I mean, your theory is that -

what, that they're into each other? Alastor. *That guy?* I don't think he's got a single romantic bone in his body."

"Well, it's just a theory, geez. And it's easy enough to test out."

"What are you gonna do?" Husk asks warily.

"At the poker game." Angel Dust nods to himself. "I'm gonna turn on the charm!"

"Right. In the meantime, I'll prepare a eulogy for your funeral."

"Wha - HUSK!"

Lucifer places the radio down on his desk, where it bumps up against the Alastor duck (squeak).

"Oh, right." He picks up the duck and stares into its red eyes. "You're still here."

It's embarrassing to look at, even after all these days *(why* did he make it so needlessly detailed). He's tempted to throw it away - but at the same time, he did promise to give one of these to Alastor.

"I guess it's time." Lucifer steels his nerves, and finally teleports in front of Alastor's room.

He's not quite ready to just materialize into his bedroom- hell, he's not Alastor, who comes and goes as he pleases. He squares his shoulders, raps on the door, *knock-knock-knock,* and waits.

and waits.

and…

there's no answer.

Maybe he's at his tower? Lucifer thinks.

He summons up a golden portal, and when he steps out, the room is eerily quiet. It's rather unwelcoming without the playing of music, without the sound of the radio show, without

Alastor himself, if he's being completely honest.

He sits down in Alastor's seat and looks down at the buttons on the panel. He wasn't paying much attention during the show, but it looks rather complicated - a mess of switches and levers that he has no idea how to operate.

"Well! I dunno where he is, then." Lucifer says aloud, wanting to break the silence.

It's disorienting being here by himself. It reminds him of all those years at the castle, Charlie absent, Lilith gone, surrounded by nothing but the never-ending solitude.

He turns his head to the window, staring up at the moon. It's crescent-shaped tonight, hanging down alone, a thin red sliver in the sky.

"Just you and me again, huh." Lucifer sighs out to the moon.

It doesn't respond back.

"Wow, okay. You've never been a good conversationalist." He scoffs.

He gets up, about to return to his room, when he catches sight of something red in the distance:

Alastor on the rooftop, gazing up at the moon by himself.

and -

a smile involuntarily forms on Lucifer's face.

"Gotcha." He murmurs.

Lucifer conjures up a portal directly behind Alastor. He makes sure to tiptoe (sneakily, carefully, quietly), taking the world's tiniest steps until he's right beside him. Alastor still hasn't noticed him, looking lost in thought, and Lucifer leans down.

"Hey." He whispers, right into his ear.

Alastor flinches - whirls around to face him - thrusts a claw at Lucifer's neck that he smoothly dodges. Alastor's eyes widen with surprise when he realizes who it is, and he drops his hand.

"It's you."

Lucifer flashes him a mischievous smile, secretly pleased to have caught Alastor off-guard.

"How'd you like *that!* Serves you right for always appearing out of nowhere. Not that great to be on the receiving side, huh?"

"Is that how you want to play it?" Alastor squints at him. "Well, then. I'll return the favour when you least expect it."

“How is that any different from usual.”

“Oh, I will ensure that you hate it!”

“Like I said, *how* is that any different from usual.”

Lucifer slumps down beside him, and they both look up at the sky together. Little red stars dot the atmosphere, and the moon looks less solitary now.

“What are you doing here?” Alastor inquires. Lucifer doesn’t have an excuse prepared, unfortunately. He probably should have thought this through a little bit.

“I was looking for you.” He ends up admitting, and Alastor lifts an eyebrow at this.

“Well. You found me.”

Alastor leans in, a smirk on his lips.

“Now what will you do to me?”

His words hit Lucifer in all sorts of ways at once, makes his breath catch in his throat, renders him tongue-tied for a long time, really long, *much too long in fact* and Alastor -

gazes at him questioningly.

And that’s when Lucifer realizes, far too late, that Alastor didn’t even notice that he’s said anything out of the ordinary. He feels embarrassment rear its ugly head again, and Lucifer quickly changes the subject to tamp it down.

“I HAVE SOMETHING!” Lucifer blurts out, and then he clears his throat, trying to lower his volume. “I, uh. Have something for you.”

Alastor’s deer ears flick up with curiosity.

“Oh? Whatever can it be?”

Lucifer clutches the duck in his pocket, about to pull it out, and then hesitates.

“Close your eyes first.”

Alastor recoils. “No.”

“Oh, come on! Just do it.”

“NO.” He hisses this time, his smile strained.

“Okay, fine, yeesh.” Lucifer rolls his eyes. “Put your hand out, then.”

Alastor still seems wary, but he eventually does put his hand out. Second thoughts plague Lucifer’s mind, and he loosens his grip on the duck.

“Actually.” Lucifer tries to backpedal. “I take it back.”

“Absolutely not!” Alastor impatiently gestures with his hand, still waiting. “It must be *quite* the gift for you to hunt me down.”

“I didn’t HUNT you down, okay,” except he kind of did, and he’s even more nervous now, “but - fine. FINE. One second.”

Lucifer takes in a deep breath, and he pulls out the duck with a flourish.

“Now presenting…” he places the duck onto Alastor’s palm (squeak), “your own, personalized, rubber duck!”

There’s no response, just Alastor staring down at it, and he feels increasingly awkward the longer he doesn’t say anything.

“Ta-da.” Lucifer smiles weakly, and then he holds his hands up to do jazz hands. “W… what do you think?"

“Is this…” he brings it up to his face to examine it, “supposed to be me?”

“Yeah.” God, Lucifer’s mouth feels so dry. “It shoots poison!”

Alastor immediately puts it down.

“First the fire, now the poison. Are you trying to murder me?” Alastor says calmly, but he does narrow his eyes at him. “I’m afraid I’m not that easy to kill.”

“I mean, it came in handy last time, didn’t it?” Lucifer huffs. “Alright, if you don’t like it, just give it back to me-”

“Well now! I would advise you not to put words in my mouth.” Alastor sounds a bit frantic. “You are so quick to jump to conclusions.”

“So does that mean… you like it?”

In lieu of responding, Alastor takes the Lucifer duck from his pocket and holds them both in his hands. They look so tiny in his large hands, and he’s smiling as per usual, but it looks almost genuine this time.

“You fucking *do!”* Lucifer realizes, and Alastor flattens his deer ears at this.

“Well, it *is* an image of me. How could I possibly hate it?”

It’s not the most flattering compliment Lucifer has received, but he takes it anyway. Alastor carefully places the ducks in the space between them, and they stare at them together.

“So then.” Lucifer tilts his head. "What are you doing here?”

It’s the same question Alastor had asked him earlier. He looks up from the ducks, and his red eyes are startlingly bright in the darkness.

“Do you really wish to know?”

It’s a loaded statement, one that Lucifer can’t seem to unpack. “Huh? Well… yeah. Of course.”

Alastor’s eyes dart away from his face, and

his chest rises,

inhale,

falls,

exhale.

“I was thinking about you.”

Alastor sounds uncharacteristically serious. It makes Lucifer sit up straighter - listen closer - focus harder. He carefully turns to face Alastor, who is still pointedly looking away from him, his eyes fixated on the moon.

“What about me?”

He’s a bit nervous to hear the answer. Alastor absentmindedly picks up the ducks again, his expression impassive.

“Oh, nothing special.” He glances at him from the corner of his eyes. “I was just musing about all that fear you carry inside of that tiny body of yours.”

“FEAR?” Lucifer repeats, offended. “For what?”

“Did you want a list? I am happy to provide you with one! First,” Alastor lifts up a finger, “your constant worry over others. Second,” Alastor lifts up another, “your ceaseless unrest about people leaving. Third - ”

Lucifer slaps his hand down, flustered and uncomfortable and feeling way, waaaay too seen. “Okay, okay. I get it. I’m pathetic. What do you want from me?”

“You misunderstand.” He says quickly, urgently.

But the next part comes out at a snail’s pace.

“Why… do… you…”

Alastor grinds the words out of his teeth. Looks down at the ducks. Looks up at the sky. Looks at anywhere but him, it seems, and then Alastor gives up on finishing his sentence, the two of them submerged under a silence that engulfs them entirely.

Despite all this:

Lucifer still sits beside him quietly, and Alastor's not sure why. They're not doing anything entertaining. For all intents and purposes, they're just two people on the roof, pretending to gaze at the stars.

Alastor picks up the ducks again. The likeness is remarkable, and he keeps detaching and reattaching the radio staff from the duck's wing.

It's when he looks at the deer ears specifically that he notices something off.

"It seems you've made a mistake." Alastor drops the duck onto Lucifer's lap. "I don't recall having such massive ears."

"Uh, they're perfect!" Lucifer bristles, and he puts the duck beside Alastor's face to compare. "Yep. Just as I thought - they look exactly the same."

"Oh, I don't think so." Alastor flicks his ears at him purposefully. "You should take a better look!"

Lucifer leans in, golden eyes studying him so intensely that Alastor loses the ability to breathe for just a moment - a mere millisecond - only drawing in a sharp intake when Lucifer moves back. "I seriously can't see the difference."

"It is a matter of scale!" To demonstrate, Alastor lifts up his ears with his hands. "You should know that a *true* professional would have held and measured them to check the dimensions."

"Wait wait wait wait. Wait." Uncertainty flashes across Lucifer's face.

"Does that mean… um... can I touch them?"

Alastor's smile freezes -

"What?"

- and he hears the sound of the record needle scratch again,

vrrriiippppp.

He hadn't expected Lucifer to take his suggestion in earnest, but the prospect does capture his interest. He doesn't let anyone touch his ears - not even Niffty, who has a penchant for climbing all over his head. His eyes flick downwards to look at Lucifer's hands, small yet strong, and lacking his wedding ring.

"Kidding!" Lucifer barks out a laugh, unnatural and definitely uncomfortable. "Hah! You were joking, right? Just a - "

"Did you want it to be a joke?"

Alastor's radio filter slips off, voice deadly serious.

That's when Lucifer pauses. Stares at him searchingly. He clears his throat, runs his hands through his blonde hair, fidgets in a million different ways before finally admitting:

"…..no."

And so Alastor dips his head down in confirmation.

And Lucifer reaches a careful hand out.

And he tugs at one of his ears -

And -

Alastor lets out a small gasp at the contact.

He's unfamiliar with it - doesn't ask for it - doesn't want it, normally, but the brief touch from Lucifer's hands knocks the air out of his lungs, stuffs his head with cotton, makes him want to chase that feeling, chase chase chase chase *chase* -

"Oh!" Lucifer hurriedly retracts his hand. "Crap. Should I stop?"

Alastor lets out a guttural growl, deep and irritated.

"I'll kill you if you stop."

Eventually, Lucifer resumes touching his ears, running through them gently. He has both hands on them now, and every now and then he ends up brushing through his hair with his fingers.

"How are your ears so cute," Lucifer mumbles, and Alastor's brain officially short-circuits.

He snaps his head up to look at him - Lucifer is absolutely, 100% bright red - "Oh fuuuuuuuucck - GOD I didn't mean to say that, JUST-IGNORE-ME." - he stumbles over his words rapidly, face full of regret.

"Is that my compliment today?" Alastor manages to say. "Or is that an insult?"

Lucifer’s confusion seems to override his discomfort. “How can that be an insult?”

“Well! What makes anything ‘cute’? It’s when they require protection, of course!” Alastor places his chin in his hand. “And I would like to think that I don’t fall under that category.”

“You - ” Lucifer shoots him a look of exasperation. “I made Razzle and Dazzle. I make rubber ducks! What do you think? It’s a *compliment,* you fucking idiot.”

“I still have my doubts about that.” Alastor's voice is even, but his heart rate picks up, and it’s distractingly noisy.

He does dip his head back down, and Lucifer, after a moment, resumes petting his ears. His hands are gentle, just as he remembered them to be, and he’s thinking about their promise again, and god.

~~He wants to hold Lucifer -~~

NO.

Alastor rejects, rejects, rejects.

Once was enough. Once was *more* than enough.

He lifts his head up to drag his eyes across Lucifer’s face, and he stares back.

“What is it?”

Lucifer sounds a bit breathless.

“Nothing.” Alastor grits out.

He feels like everything’s spinning wildly out of control, and now he’s falling

deeper

and

deeper

and

deeper

and

(~~once is not enough.~~)

Despite everything, Lute knows better than to openly disobey Sera's command. She's requested another meeting with her - only this time, she knows exactly how to get permission to go down to Hell.

"Lute." Sera fixes her with a stern look. "I won't change my mind. There's too much at stake here, and I'm concerned you're going to stir up unrest."

"I understand, your highness. But please - I just want to bring back…"

It's here that she has to admit something, and it hurts to even say it.

"I want to bring back Adam's body." Lute says quietly. "You wouldn't let me go down for it after the extermination. He shouldn't be left there, and you know it."

Sera's eyes widen at this. There's some sympathy that flashes through her steely stare, and her voice is a little softer.

"Lute. He's probably long gone by now."

It's a painful truth that Lute has trouble acknowledging, but she nods curtly anyway. "I know. Even so, I still have to try."

Sera sighs. Stares out at the clouds of Heaven. She finally looks back at Lute, and there's an air of resignation around her next sentence.

"I… well, I can understand your feelings, at least. I'll permit you to go down there to look for him." Sera leans down, expression grave. "However. If I hear even a whisper about any sort of violence down there, you'll be held accountable."

Yes. YES! Lute thinks, and she stands up straighter.

"Of course. I won't hurt them."

It's the truth. She's not planning to injure anyone.

But she's got something else up her sleeve.

Chapter End Notes

Fun Facts:
- the autographs are from the ball (ch. 11)
- this is the 3rd time they held hands (ch. 5, ch. 12)
- red moon on the rooftop again! They met there in ch. 9 and ch. 10
- Record needle scratch callback from ch. 11
- He flicked his ears away from Niffty when she tried to touch his ears in ch. 9
- People seemed to miss that little red radio from ch. 4 so I brought it back!!
- The radio is a metaphor for Alastor, of course. The moon serves as a metaphor for Lucifer.
- Lucifer has wanted to pet those ears since ch. 7!

The chapter was getting too long, so I split it into two. See you next Friday! Please leave your theories/suggestions below <3

The Cherry

Chapter Notes

CH. 15 FANART:
- drawn by @dirtgrubber
- drawn by: @haydieks
- drawn by @def-not-kaz-brekker

If you want to know what they're wearing in this chapter, please check out this GORGEOUS fanart made by @radioducky aka @Ninecloud_Se7en

You can find me on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Charlie!"

"Dad!"

Lucifer is the first to arrive at the party, and Charlie presents the space with a flourish. It's completely transformed into a Vegas-style casino, filled to the brim with blinking lights and colourful machines.

"Welcome to your celebration! We have a ton of games and activities, so feel free to play… well, whatever you want to!"

"Wow, Charlie. You've really outdone yourself!" Lucifer whistles appreciatively at the sight. "Although… hooh, boy. I have no idea where to start."

"No problem. Let me show you what I've got planned for tonight!"

She passes over a thick notepad to him, and he looks over at her notes:

Charlie's Casino Celebration Checklist (aka C^4)

- Slot machines
- Table games (roulette, baccarat, etc.)
- Self serve bar - drink responsibly
- Casino chip kiosks (unlimited tokens)
- Poker table

"Sooo, to close off the night, I was thinking we can all play poker together." Charlie gestures towards a large oval card table, covered in felt. "Husk agreed to be our dealer! And - "

She pauses mid-sentence to look at his outfit, which makes *him* look down as well.

“Dad,” Charlie says delicately, as though she were struggling on how to phrase it, “this is not a big deal *at all,* but I’ve actually decided on a dress code for the party! And although you look AH-MAZE-ING in your usual clothes, do you have something fancier for tonight?”

That’s when Lucifer registers that Charlie is wearing something entirely new - a corseted vest atop a plaid button up - and her hair is loose and free.

“Oh! No wonder you look different. Of course I can.”

Gotta wear something fancy, Lucifer thinks, *but what colour?*

His mind wanders over to Alastor - perpetually in red and black - and he snaps his fingers distractedly, changing his outfit in an instant.

But then Charlie looks at him, puzzled.

“Oh! That shirt… It’s not a colour you normally wear. Not that it looks bad!”

“What?” Lucifer lifts up his arm to check the sleeve, which-

he had made it red.

aaaaaaand his face starts to match the shade.

“Whoops! Just - a small wardrobe malfunction!” Lucifer adjusts it to pink in an instant, and he throws on a white vest for good measure. “This is better.”

“What is?”

“ARGH!”

He glowers at Alastor, who seems pleased to have caught him off-guard. He's morphed out from his shadow to stand beside him, and Lucifer points at him aggressively.

“Alright, that’s it. The next time you do that, we’re going to fight.”

“Is that so?” Alastor’s grin is all teeth. “Why wait? Let’s settle our score right now.”

“No fighting tonight!” Charlie says hurriedly. Alastor fiddles with his cuffs, visibly annoyed.

“Hmm. That’s a lot less *fun,* but I suppose we’ll table this brawl for another day.”

Lucifer takes the opportunity to glance over at him. Alastor has a jacket thrown over his shoulders, black with an argyle lining, and his shirt is a deep, dark red. Although he’s always been tall and lean, the cut of the fabric really accentuates it.

The *problem* is that it’s the exact shade of red Lucifer’s shirt used to be, right before he switched colours, and he feels like he’s about to combust from mortification.

Even worse:

Charlie seems to pick up on that fact as well, and she looks at the two of them rather oddly.

“I…” She hesitates, and then starts inching towards the door. “I’m just going to go check on Vaggie. Please, please, PLEASE don’t burn anything down. Okay?”

“Charlie - ”

Lucifer wants to explain himself, but what can he even say? *I was thinking of Alastor and that’s why my suit was red, no it was not planned, I mean I guess in the back of my head I figured that he would wear red but it wasn’t intentional I swear -*

It’s too late now, anyway; Charlie disappears around the corner with the swish of her coattails, and it’s just the two of them in the faux casino.

“It has been quite some time since I’ve visited one of these places.” Alastor taps one of the slot machines, and as Lucifer looks around, an idea worms its way into his head.

“Oh yeah? I guess that means you’re ready to lose.” Lucifer grins wickedly, and Alastor immediately understands his insinuation.

“I’m quite certain that I will be the victor tonight. You should know that I have an excellent poker face!”

“Wanna bet?”

Alastor’s eyes glow with intrigue.

“How very interesting. What are the stakes?”

Lucifer picks up a casino chip, red and black in colour. “Winner is whoever has the most chips. And the prize… uh…”

Lucifer reflects on their past wagers- the bow-tie game- infiltrating V Tower for photographs-

“Same as usual?”

Alastor taps his finger on his chin. “Fulfilling a single request? Well then. Those terms are fairly agreeable.”

“HAH! You’ll regret it once I win.”

“Once *I* win.”

Lucifer shakes his head vehemently, but his hair - normally slicked back - is wild and untamed tonight. Every time he pushes it back, it falls onto his eyes, and Alastor’s eyes follow the motion.

“Looks like you’re struggling to tame your hair. How unsightly!”

“Oh, fuck off.” Lucifer runs his fingers through his hair, but his blonde locks refuse to cooperate. “I ran out of gel, okay?”

“What a terrible excuse. I believe Charlie enforced a certain requirement on attire tonight.” Alastor sounds casual, but there’s something else in his expression.

(Like he’s… conflicted?)

“Well, what am I supposed to do about it!” Lucifer groans. “It’s too short to do anything, okay?”

“Oh, you. Don’t you tire of constantly being wrong?”

Before Lucifer can send back a retort, Alastor snaps his fingers to materialize two hair pins, long and red in appearance.

“These will have to do for now.” He offers them to Lucifer, his smile unreadable. “You should at least *attempt* to look suitable for the occasion.”

Lucifer looks down at the hair pins, and then back at Alastor. He can’t pinpoint what Alastor’s thinking; he’s in one of those moods where all his telltale signs are carefully neutral. Deer ears static. Smile innocuous.

(Eyes impenetrable, like a protected fortress.)

“Um... sure.”

Lucifer slowly reaches his hand out, his fingers grazing Alastor’s palm, so delicate and quick it’s barely detectable, but Alastor -

flinches at the contact -

and it makes him fumble, dropping the pins onto Alastor’s hand clumsily.

“Wow!” Lucifer tries to laugh it off while snatching the pins back up. “Butterfingers over here.”

He hastily slides the pins over the left side of his head. It’s not quite securing his hair in place - the blonde strands refuse to stay put - but it’s hard without a mirror.

It’s even harder when Alastor is just staring at him as he’s floundering.

“Your incompetence is, once again, disgraceful.” Alastor heaves out a deep sigh, and he plucks the hair pins right out of his hands.

“Hey! What gives?” Lucifer protests.

Alastor’s eyes flit unsurely between the pins,

Lucifer's hair,

the pins again…

"I…" Alastor's every word is chosen carefully. "…grow weary of watching you struggle."

The next part happens in slow motion:

Alastor extends his hand towards him, and his long red fingers approach his face little by little, the distance shrinking, shrinking, shrinking…

It's unclear what Alastor is planning, but Lucifer longs to find out. Waits with bated breath, until -

Alastor runs his fingers through Lucifer's hair,

and softly tucks a stray strand behind his ear.

"Such a mess."

Alastor's voice is quiet, but his words echo in Lucifer's mind, *mess-mess-mess,* and it matches the rapid beating of his heart.

His touch throws Lucifer back to last night, to the events on the rooftop, to the moon and stars and matching ducks and fluffy ears and unfinished sentences. Alastor's every word and action is so mysterious, so coded behind layers upon layers. Inscrutable. Perplexing.

Alastor's hand moves deftly after that. He ends up fastening his blonde locks in place, making an X-shape with the hair pins, and all too quickly, he's done.

"Is it better now?"

Lucifer tries to sound breezy - like he couldn't care less - but his throat feels tight.

"Much better." Alastor murmurs. His hand lingers for just a moment, before it drops down to his side.

BAM!

The door slams open, and they both snap their heads to look at the intrusion. Rosie ventures in, wearing an elegant evening frock, and she waves at them both.

"Oops! I don't realize my own strength, sometimes." She laughs airily. Alastor walks over to greet her, and after a beat, Lucifer follows.

"Rosie!" Alastor's voice does a complete 180, all bright and breezy. "You look absolutely splendid."

"Oh, Alastor. Always a charmer." Rosie looks down at Lucifer, and she motions towards his hair. "Is that a new hairstyle, your majesty? It's wonderful!"

Lucifer's touches the hair pins self-consciously. He hasn't had a chance to check the mirror, so he has no idea how it looks, but Rosie seems sincere.

"Um. This is, uh." Shit, why can't he stop stuttering? "His handiwork."

Rosie glances over at Alastor, and a teasing smile grows on her face. "Oh? Alastor, I didn't know you liked to do *hair."*

Her voice is thick with implication, and Alastor smiles stiffly.

"On occasion."

Rosie places her hand on Alastor's arm affectionately, and Lucifer can't help but watch as the two of them strike up a lively conversation.

In his head:

He knows that Alastor and Rosie have been friends for a long time. There's a sense of ease when they chat, a tangible comfort when they're together. Which is very normal. Terrific, actually!

In his heart:

Their casual intimacy catches him off guard each time.

And he's ~~not~~ fine with it.

Sure, he and Alastor have gotten better at Re: The Friendship Stuff. It's just… he still has trouble understanding what's acceptable and what's not. Most interactions with Alastor makes him feel lost, like he's navigating the seas without a compass.

But Rosie just - does. No second-guessing, no deliberating. And it fills him with a strange sense of envy, bends him out of shape, and Lucifer has to tear his gaze away.

Rosie is perfectly nice. Okay? In fact, she's been nothing but polite the whole time he's known her.

But does she have to be with them at *every* moment?

“Oh my! Looks like I’ve hit the jackpot again.” Rosie says cheerfully. She’s playing on the slot machine right between Alastor and Lucifer, and he doesn’t know why that observation irks him a little.

“It appears that I am also on a winning streak!” Alastor leans back on his chair to look at Lucifer. “It would do wonders for you if you were to concentrate. Or have you already accepted your impending loss?”

Lucifer tilts his head back, and the two of them make eye contact. “Oh, shut up. Anything can happen! And the night is still young.”

“Unlike you.” Alastor jeers.

“Unlike *you.”* He returns. He pulls the handle down on his machine, and when none of the images match up, *again,* he lets out a grumble. “O-kay, I need a drink.”

Alastor watches Lucifer as he gets out of his seat. “Oh? I doubt alcohol will help you win. At best, it’ll muddle your mind.”

“Yeah, but at least I can tune you out better. Finally! Some peace and quiet.”

“What a shame. I thought you enjoyed hearing my voice!”

“Not as much as you do.” Lucifer replies absentmindedly, and Alastor’s smile deepens.

“So you do like it.”

Lucifer realizes, way too late, that he had somewhat admitted to liking Alastor’s voice. Which - it’s not bad to listen to. Even with the radio filter on, his musical lilt is apparent, and in the rare moments when his filter disappears, it’s even… ~~pleasing~~

just fine to hear.

“No,” Lucifer says retroactively, but it’s too late now, and he knows it and Alastor knows it and Rosie knows it even though she’s pretending that she’s not listening, and he takes hurried steps to the bar,

one
two
three
four
five,

regretting again. He loathes that he speaks without thinking - hates it with a passion - and he reaches a hand out to grab the bottle full of whiskey, the crystal glinting prettily under the neon lights.

But his hand doesn’t hit the cool glass.

“What’s this now? Isn’t whiskey much too bitter for you?” Alastor (when did he even follow after him?) has his red fingers on the bottle, long and sharp, and *that’s* what Lucifer is touching, his own hand covering Alastor’s much larger one.

Hands, hands, hands. It’s always *something* about them. Lucifer thinks about the first time they held hands - when he healed him - and the moments thereafter, dancing together, going through portals, when he fell and Alastor caught him.

His eyes flicker down and his hand is still on top of Alastor’s and -

neither of them have pulled away.

Alastor’s fingers, bright red and always so arresting to look at, twitch uncertainly beneath Lucifer’s hold. It’s hard to believe that he once thought of them as large and eerie.

Now, he’s seized by the urge to intertwine their fingers together.

Lucifer blinks at the notion - *what the fuck,* he thinks, and he yanks his hand back like he just got burned.

“Well, y’know.” Lucifer says hurriedly. “Add some vermouth, a cherry, and BAM! Now it’s a Manhattan.”

Alastor narrows his eyes at him. “You really do have the most revolting tastebuds.”

“I’m not gonna take that from someone who eats rotting meat.”

Alastor pours the amber liquid into two cups, and, in one of the glasses, he conjures up a maraschino cherry.

“Your sugar water.” Alastor says wryly, but he still pushes the cup over to Lucifer. He rolls his eyes. Takes a sip, not expecting much from the drink, but.

It’s… delicious?

“Woah!” Lucifer takes another swig before setting it down on the table. “I think you’re in the wrong career. Stop torturing souls and become a bartender instead.”

“I don’t think so! Only *you* would enjoy something so sickeningly sweet.”

“You’re missing out.” Lucifer scoffs. The whiskey burns as it goes down his throat, cloying yet satisfying. “Don’t knock it ’til you try it.”

The offer slips out, half-serious, half-joking, with full expectation that Alastor will shoot him down immediately. He pops the maraschino cherry into his mouth, and it’s only after a long period of No Response From Alastor that Lucifer starts to get a little worried.

“Are you asking me…” Alastor breaks the silence, “to drink from your cup?”

He sounds suspicious. A bit guarded.

“Well.” Lucifer pauses. “Friends share drinks, don’t they?”

Alastor seems to ruminate over this. Lucifer brushes his hands through his hair distractedly, but his fingers land on the cool metal of the hair pins, still in an X-shape. Recalls the sensation of Alastor cautiously styling his hair, warm and careful.

And Lucifer finally looks up, his eyes half-lidded.

“Want a taste?”

Alastor jolts, smile frozen on his face. His deer ears flatten, and Lucifer clutches his glass tighter - well, shit.

Did I cross a line? He thinks. Lucifer’s lost in the seas again, directionless, lacking a compass, unable to interpret the meaning behind Alastor’s silence.

But then -

Alastor holds his hand out.

“If you insist.”

Lucifer blinks once.

Twice.

He places the cup down onto his palm, and their fingers brush against each other, pinky fingers barely touching. Alastor hesitates for a second before he lifts the glass to his lips, and takes a cautious sip.

Alastor immediately sticks his tongue out - it’s startlingly pink - longer than he expected -

“Yuck.” Alastor says, but his voice fades into background noise, Lucifer much too fixated on that brief flash of tongue to really register anything else - *fuck,* why can’t he wrench his eyes away at the sight?

Alastor puts the cup back onto the table to grab the entire whiskey bottle instead, and Lucifer digs his fingers into his palms to focus.

“Disgusting. As I had expected! I will be drinking from this tonight.” Alastor directs this to Lucifer, but he’s having difficulty forming a coherent thought.

“Are you gonna take the whole thing? We’re supposed to drink responsibly.” Lucifer’s voice is rough- lowered-

and Alastor sends a conspiratorial look at him. Places his finger onto his own lips, like he’s keeping a secret.

“I won’t tell if you don’t.”

The very veins inside of Lucifer burn like lava, and he throws blame onto the alcohol.

“Alastor!” Rosie’s sudden appearance jerks Lucifer out of the flames and into reality. He takes a large step away from them, watching as she pulls Alastor by the arm. “There’s a two-player slot machine here. Shall we play it together?”

“How delightful! Lead the way.”

Lucifer stares at their backs as they venture further and further away. Once he can't see them anymore, he downs the rest of his drink in one hasty gulp.

Afterwards, it’s hard for him to concentrate.

He can’t get the fleeting sight of Alastor’s tongue out of his head, and it’s driving him up the wall. Can his brain shut the fuck up so that he can pay attention to the games, please?

Even so, Lucifer manages to keep his wits about him, and the two of them end up playing every single machine in the casino.

“It appears that I’ve won!” Alastor would say.

“Looks like I’m the winner, bitch!” Lucifer would return.

And after-game-after-game-after-game, they’re unfortunately stuck at a standstill.

“Okay, we need a tiebreaker.” Lucifer huffs. “Is there something we haven’t done yet?”

“Charlie and them are congregating over there.” Alastor points to the poker table, which is overflowing with piles of casino chips. “Shall we make that our final battle?”

“Works for me.” Lucifer leans in, and Alastor smiles at him maliciously. “Get ready to lose!”

“Unfortunately for you, I don’t plan to!”

Most of them have taken spots already at the poker table. Alastor settles down beside Rosie; while Lucifer looks around at the table for a seat, Alastor taps the empty chair beside him with his radio cane.

“Sit down so we can get started.” It’s a command, not a request, and Lucifer lets out a noise of disgruntlement.

But he does sits down beside Alastor.

And Rosie watches this unfold with great absorption.

“Do we have enough players?” Charlie asks Husk. He waves his hand to signal ‘no’, the cuffs around his wrists jingling in the process.

“One sec - Angel’s on his way.”

As if on cue, Angel Dust slams the doors open dramatically.

“Hey, baby. The main attraction is here!” Angel Dust saunters in, and they all turn to look at him. Although he’s normally dressed up, he cranks it up a notch tonight, adorned in gold accessories and wearing strappy black clothes that emphasize his chest fluff.

“Woah, Angel!” Charlie claps appreciatively. “You look terrific!”

“Thanks, doll.” Angel Dust says breezily. His eyes scour the room, and he cocks a hip to the side. “Ooh, I wonder where I should sit.”

He sashays forward, pointedly ignores all the other available chairs, and stops where Lucifer’s sitting. Angel Dust props an arm on the back of his chair, and he leans down suggestively.

“Hey, daddy. Aren’t you a sight for sore eyes.” Angel Dust sends him a smirk, and Lucifer looks up in confusion.

“Huh? Oh - did you want this seat?”

“Don’t mind if I do!”

And Angel Dust plops himself down, right onto Lucifer’s lap.

“What the - ” He gets cut off when Angel Dust places a finger on his lips. He sits bridal-style on Lucifer’s lap, legs draped over the armrest, and he slings one of his six arms around his shoulder.

“What? I’m just sittin’ in the best seat in the house.” Angel Dust bats his eyelashes at him, and…

Lucifer is really, really bewildered. They’re friendly enough with one another, but he’s always gotten the vibe that he frustrated Angel Dust, somehow.

“So then,” Angel Dust places one of his gloved hands onto Lucifer’s chest, “what’s a guy like you doing in a place like - AGH!”

Alastor rams Angel Dust’s leg with his radio cane.

“Don’t you know the rules? It’s one person per chair.” Alastor says cheerfully, but his eyes have no warmth in them. Angel Dust scowls at him before grabbing Lucifer’s chin, forcing him to look into his mismatched eyes.

“Here’s a better idea: why don’t we ditch this joint and play some strip poker in my room?”

Lucifer blinks at this, confused. “How would you even play poker with only two people?”

Angel Dust drops his act for a second, looking visibly annoyed, but then he quickly smooths back into Flirt Mode©. “Oh, I can think of something much more fun we can do in my bedroom - OW!”

Alastor stabs his hand with his radio staff this time.

“Now, now. This is a group celebration.” Alastor’s smile looks increasingly forced. “It would be such a shame if you leave! Why don’t you take a seat so that we can start?”

“Nah.” Angel Dust jeers at him, and Alastor’s eye twitches. “I like where I’m sittin’. Why do you want me to move so bad?”

“Yes, Alastor.” Rosie chimes in, entwining her fingers under her chin. “Why *do* you want him to move so much?”

Alastor shoots her a glare, but Rosie doesn’t look bothered at all.

“Can you get off now?” Lucifer asks, and Angel Dust leans in, the tips of their noses touching. He’s so close that he can practically feel Angel Dust’s breath, cold and minty-fresh.

“Oh, I can get *you* off - ACK!”

Alastor grabs Angel Dust using his shadow and shoves him onto a different chair. It all happens in the blink of an eye, and Angel Dust shoots out of his new seat indignantly.

“HEY! What gives?!” Angel Dust complains. “That hurt, you freak!”

“I do hate repeating myself.” Alastor’s eyes glow, ticking away into radio dials. “But I will say this one more time: you are holding up the game. Lucifer and I have a bet to uphold, after all.”

“Hell yeah.” Lucifer smirks. “Prepare yourself. I’m going to *eat* your *ass!”*

Angel Dust lets out a spluttering cough. “What the actual - rephrase it. Rephrase it RIGHT NOW.”

“Huh? Oh. I’m definitely gonna win tonight.” Lucifer says, and Angel Dust scrunches his eyebrows, trying his best to decipher.

And then clarity appears in his eyes.

“Beat. It’s *beat* your ass.” Angel Dust lets out a deep sigh, clearly irritated, and *that’s* an expression that Lucifer is familiar with.

“Oh, good!” Lucifer can’t help but smile. “You look more like yourself again.”

Angel Dust raises his eyebrows in surprise, but he ends up smiling back. “Aw. You know what? I’m rather moved that you noticed.”

He places one of his six hands onto Lucifer’s shoulder, more friendly than flirty.

In the background, Alastor’s shadow leaps out of his back from vexation.

“Bet.”

“Call.”

“Raise.”

“Fold.”

They’ve been playing for quite some time, and Lucifer watches with horror as his poker chips dwindle and Alastor’s grows exponentially.

“Shit. You weren’t kidding when you said you have a good poker face.” Lucifer folds again, annoyed at the outcome.

“Looks like you won’t be ‘eating my ass’ tonight, hmm?” Alastor mocks, and Angel Dust slaps his hand onto his own forehead.

“Oh, for the love of - you two have to stop.” Angel Dust grumbles. “IT’S BEAT. BEAT YOUR ASS!”

“Reveal your cards.” Husk drones, and they all flip it over.

“Yay! I got a royal flush!” Niffty yells.

“Niffty.” Vaggie flips her ponytail over her shoulder, before squinting at her. “That’s your fifth one in a row.”

“Hold up.” Lucifer says slowly. “I don’t think this game is legal.”

“Are you accusing me?” Niffty cries out.

“Ab-so-lute-ly.” Vaggie gets out of her seat and walks towards her, her red gown swishing with every step she takes. “There is no way you can even have *five* royal flushes. I mean, we only have four sets of kings, queens and jacks in a deck.”

Vaggie grabs Niffty and starts to shake her around. Extra cards tumble out of the folds of her puffy dress, and Husk takes a drag from his cigar.

“Niff. You’ve been cheatin'.”

“Whatever! I know *you’re* a cheater!” Niffty points at Husk emphatically. “And you! And you!”

She continues to point at every single person, all except for Charlie, Vaggie, Lucifer…

and Alastor.

“Are you serious?” Vaggie looks visibly pissed off. *“Half* of you were cheating? What was the whole point of playing this, then?!”

“Hey, it’s all in good fun, isn’t it?” Angel Dust cackles. They devolve into bickering, but Lucifer doesn’t participate, instead turning towards Alastor.

“So you… didn’t cheat?”

“I’m very good at bluffing.” Alastor throws his cards down onto the table, and his hand is really quite awful. “Besides, I don’t need to cheat to beat *you,* ha-ha!”

“Technically, it’s a draw.” Lucifer smiles at him smugly, runs his fingers through his hair - hits the X-shaped pins again. He keeps forgetting that they’re there, and he drops his hand down immediately.

“A draw?” Alastor drums his fingers against the table, looking displeased. “Well. I suppose that is accurate. A request from each of us, then?”

Lucifer blinks at this, not expecting him to agree, and *definitely* not expecting him to update the rules in that way. He mulls over the revised terms, before eventually nodding.

In the meantime, the squabble turns even more heated, and they’re yelling and throwing chips and cards and Charlie tries to calm them down and Vaggie turns red from exertion and -

Alastor gestures towards the door with his head. “Let’s make our exit here, shall we?”

They’re about to leave the room when Rosie places a hand on Alastor’s arm.

“Alastor, can you stay for a second?” She asks. Alastor raises an eyebrow, but he does linger behind. “He’ll be with you in a second, your majesty.”

A flicker of annoyance flashes across Lucifer’s face, so quick that Alastor might have imagined it.

“I’ll wait for you at the stairs.” He waves good-bye. “See ya, Rosie.”

“Good bye, your highness.” She waits for Lucifer to disappear around the corner before turning to face him. "I just need you to explain something, mister. What’s next for you?”

They stare at each other, and he’s having some difficulty understanding what exactly Rosie’s asking for.

“What is this in reference to?”

Rosie smiles at him with some exasperation. “About Lucifer.”

“Lucifer?” Alastor repeats. “There is no *next.* It’s done. Finalized! We’re friends now.”

“Well,” and Rosie looks like she’s pondering the best way to say it, “I think there might be a next for *you.”*

He… doesn’t comprehend.

“Just think about it.” She lets go of him.

And he’s left ever more in the dark.

They walk through the hallway together, side-by-side. The hotel is unnaturally quiet after the hubbub of the poker game; they even sip from their whiskey glasses in silence, and the lack of noise is starting to drive Lucifer crazy.

So he settles for something tried and true -

“What’s my compliment today?”

“Oh?” Alastor looks at him curiously. “Well.”

He finishes his glass of whiskey first.

And then he pours some more.

And downs that one too.

“Woah.” Lucifer says, amused. “Save some for the rest of us - ”

Alastor immediately refills Lucifer’s cup from his bottle, the alcohol splashing out a bit. He then snaps his fingers, conjuring so many maraschino cherries they overflow from the glass, and spill out onto the floor.

“What in the - ”

“That tail of yours.” Alastor cuts in. Lucifer looks at him, but he’s deliberately avoiding eye contact. “Do you only have it in your demon form?”

“Oh. Yeah, why?”

He speaks in haltingly, stilted sentences. “Well. It looks. Handy.”

“Handy?” Lucifer echoes. “I guess? I mean, I can wrap it around stuff.”

“Can you now?” Alastor sounds pensive. “I’ll keep that in mind.”

It’s Lucifer’s turn to offer up a compliment. His eyes flick back up at Alastor’s ears, but he’s already commended them once.

Although… a thought crosses his mind.

“Since you have ears. Do you also have a tail?”

Alastor’s deer ears flatten. “Why do you ask?”

“That’s not a no.” Lucifer grins, and he grumbles in response.

Alastor looks a bit nervous at the topic, and Lucifer has the impulse to put his mind at rest - to pet his ears, or something. But he’s only done it once, and he doesn’t want to make Alastor uncomfortable in any way, so he keeps his hands to himself.

Instead, Lucifer says something stupid:

“You’re kinda considerate.”

“What?”

Alastor visibly stiffens up - smile freezing, body bristling, eyes widening from surprise - Lucifer starts tripping over his words again - “Yeah, I mean, you know-”

He takes in a deep breath. Steadies himself.

“The drink, tonight. Right?” He picks up a cherry from his cup, red and glossy. The fruit falls off the stalk, and he’s left holding just the stem between his fingers. “I mean, look at all this. You didn’t have to, but you did.”

Alastor still doesn’t respond, and he’s still stiff as hell, and it’s awkward and

Lucifer For Fuck’s Sake Don’t Make This WEIRD,

he hurries to say something - anything -

“DO YOU LIKE TRICKS?” Lucifer all but yells, and Alastor jolts back from his outburst. “Who doesn’t like tricks, AM-I-RIGHT? Okay, watch this.”

His head is a bit dizzy from the alcohol, and he feels warm, warmer, warmest, whiskey burning all the way down into his body.

“So this is a veeeeeeery ordinary cherry stem.” Lucifer dangles it in his hands. “And now, I’m just gonna…”

He puts the cherry stalk in his mouth. After a moment, he sticks his tongue out to reveal a perfect knot in the stem, and Alastor’s eyes hone in on the sight, unblinking, hyper-focused.

(And everything is blazing hot when Alastor stares at him with those piercing red eyes.)

“Voila!” He takes it out, and waves it in front of his face. “Cool, huh? Just a fun li’l party trick. Seems to be a big hit whenever I do it.”

“Hmm.” Alastor leans in to look at it up close. “Fascinating.”

It’s here that Lucifer realizes he’s walked Alastor to his door, for some reason.

“Oh, we're at your room.” He puts the stem back into his cup, and he starts to form a portal. “I guess I’ll see you.”

“No.”

“No?”

Alastor opens his door.

“I know what request to ask of you.”

He looks down at him, his smile wide and mysterious.

“What about you, *Lucifer?”*

His portal fizzles out, and - like always - he feels a strange draw to him, as though he’s attached to Alastor by an invisible string.

Lucifer moves before he can even think about it, making his way in, and the door shuts behind them.

Lute gazes at the Hazbin Hotel, and she’s engulfed by the memories of the last Extermination Day, the standoff with Hell, the bloodshed, the moment she lost her arm, the moment where she lost *Adam* -

She tears her eyes away from the red landscape, and she kicks at the dirt from anger.

“Fucking Hellborn trash.” She spits out. She’s been looking around for some time now, and…

Adam’s gone.

Of course.

It’s been a few months, and that fact shouldn’t hurt at this point, but the pain will always be there.

It’s from the corner of her eye that she finds - buried in the dirt - just the smallest scrap of his shirt, gold and brilliantly shiny. She digs it out with her bare hands, and she almost wants to sob at the sight, but she reins it in.

“Rest in peace, sir.”

She tucks the fabric into her pocket before steeling herself, staring determinedly at the hotel.

“Time to visit that little monster.”

Chapter End Notes

Every week I try to write a shorter chapter and every week I fail.

Fun Facts:
- It’s always been about the HANDS! Hands as a symbol.
- Since Lucifer tied his hair back for him (ch. 13) I figured Alastor should return the favour.
- Alastor made Lucifer sweet coffee (ch. 9) so I wanted him to make him another drink!
- Alastor actually stuck his tongue out before (ch. 3) but back then they were just acquaintances, so Lucifer really didn't think much of it.
- Lucifer's improper slang strikes again! Previous times were ch. 7 and ch. 11.

I am thrilled to write the next update! What do you think they’ll request from each other? Also warning: I fully intend to crank up the heat (within the boundaries of T+). See you next Friday, let me know any theories/suggestions below!

The Promise (Reprise)

Chapter Notes

CH. 16 FANART:
- drawn by @AlfenMeri: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5
- drawn by @dirtgrubber
- drawn by @taschamix
- drawn by @of-spaceships-and-cats
- drawn by @thekrazykook
- drawn by @scarletpineapple
- drawn by @vesselslut
- drawn by @sterlingfiction
- drawn by @veryfasy: 1 + 2
- drawn by @YanYanxieee
- drawn by @otsmosis
- drawn by: @sonshiitsu

Send me anything to my Tumblr: @morningstarwrites + My Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lute breaks in to the hotel through the side door.

Although the layout of the building is pretty straightforward, it's strangely unoccupied. She's starting to feel concerned that she got the wrong address when she hears chatter drifting from upstairs.

"O-kay, PARTY'S OVER!" Someone shouts. Lute can recognize that voice anywhere - it's from the *defector.* Vaggie. "Time for clean-up. And everyone has to pitch in. Except for you, Rosie. Thanks for coming tonight."

"Hey, Alastor and Lucifer aren't here! What, we have to clean, but they don't? That's not fair!"

"Angel, it's a party thrown in their honour. Obviously they don't have to help out."

"Ooh, I love cleaning!" There's a squeaking noise, the pitter-patter of footsteps, and then more shrieking. "I'm going to get my special tools, and I'll be back to kill all the bugs!"

The door gets pushed open, and Lute peeks out from her hiding spot to see who's leaving.

It's a little creature. *That* little creature.

The one who killed Adam.

“Found you.”

Angel Dust grabs Husk by his shoulders. “We’d love to stay, but we gotta, y’know. Go to the bathroom.”

“Together?” Vaggie asks incredulously.

“Yes, *together!”* Angel Dust says hurriedly. “I need his help, with, uh. Combing… my… back fluff?”

Vaggie sends over such an icy glare that the temperature lowers a few degrees.

“That,” she deadpans, “is a terrible excuse. Get back here and clean, or so help me, I will - ”

“You got it under control! I believe in ya!” Angel Dust yanks Husk out of the room before Vaggie can intercept. They exit out into the hallway, running past the washroom and into Angel Dust’s self-proclaimed Investigation Room.*

(*It’s just an unused room in the hotel that he bogarted.)

“Well." Husk says wryly. "This ain’t the way to the bathroom.”

“Don’t be an idiot.” Angel Dust huffs. “You know what we’re here for.”

They both look at the cork board, which is covered in a staggering amount of evidence at this point. He rips out a piece of paper from his notebook and pins it onto the board: *Alastor = insanely jealous when I flirted with Lucifer.*

“Well, what did we learn today?” Angel Dust says smugly. “That you should *always* listen to me?”

Husk looks at him with some wariness. “Okay, fine - maybe there’s a little kernel of truth in your theory. But how far are you gonna go to find out?”

“I’m so close now!” Angel Dust protests. “See? I knew that Alastor’s got to have *some* kind of an interest in the king. So maybe I just have to flirt with Alastor this time-”

Suddenly, a hand grabs his shoulder.

Someone who is *not* Husk.

“Oh?” A cheerful voice says. “What’s this?”

Angel Dust whirls around in fear, fully expecting it be Alastor or Lucifer, but -

it’s Rosie.

She looks deeply amused, and her pitch black eyes scan the photographs - the notes - the red string - “Oh. My. Stars. Is this some sort of romantic investigation? My favourite!”

“Yeah, it is!” Angel Dust is initially excited, and then transitions into suspicion. “But, uh. You’re not gonna tell Alastor, are you?”

“Of course not. Dealing with emotions require a delicate hand.” Even so, Rosie has a sparkle in her eyes. “I do think it would be helpful to push him in the right direction. Why don’t we discuss your findings so far?”

The radio is on, as always.

It envelopes the room in a smooth, jazzy tune, and Lucifer leans back on his armchair, still munching away at the cherries that Alastor had given him. They’re sitting across from each other in their own chairs, and they’re separated by a table in-between.

Lucifer feels warm.

Content.

The world is a hazy blur from the combination of alcohol, the flickering fireplace, the old-timey jazz, and he lolls his head to the side to look at Alastor.

Maybe it’s because he’s in his own room, but Alastor looks perfectly at ease. He’s humming along to the song, and although he had called him in, the only activities they’ve done so far have been:

- sitting
- drinking
- listening to music

And every now and then, they make eye contact.

But it's always brief. And Alastor looks away first and Lucifer looks away second and the cycle continues, rinse and repeat, over and over again until he can't stand it anymore and he opens his mouth to say -

"Hey."

That single word is enough to capture Alastor's attention. He lifts his head up, whiskey bottle still in his hands.

"Did you have something to discuss?" He asks.

Unfortunately, Lucifer's mouth moves faster than his brain, because he has no idea how he had planned to finish that sentence.

But then the rest of it comes out involuntarily:

"What did Rosie talk to you about?"

He winces after he says it, because he already knows what's going to happen. Alastor will disregard the question, give some sort of vague response, and look at him with eyes that say *back off*. Like always.

Or even if he does answer, it'll be strained; spoken through gritted teeth. All signs point to an undesirable outcome. Lucifer resumes eating his cherries, not really expecting him to answer, and in the midst of it all,

he had forgotten that,

more than anything,

Alastor has always been *surprising*.

"I would like to know as well." Alastor sighs with some exasperation. "But unfortunately, she has absolutely confounded me."

And Lucifer chokes on his cherry, for two reasons:

1. Alastor answered his question immediately
2. He found someone *else* confusing?

"That can't be true." Lucifer manages to say. "You're like, the king of being confou-confoundation. Confoundering? Confoundoun…"

All the words are starting to sound weird coming out of his mouth, and the more he tries to speak, the more Alastor's grin grows.

"Are you, perhaps, *inebriated?"*

"Nope. I'm not ine… inebreeeee…" God, he can't pronounce it. Maybe he is, a little. "WHAT-EVER. And besides, that drink you made me was 90% cherries."

"And 100% revolting!"

"Hey!" Lucifer scowls. He grabs a cherry from his cup, throws it right at Alastor's face, which he doesn't dodge.

Or more accurately, *can't* dodge. It hits him right on his cheek (splat), and Alastor looks almost surprised at the impact. They both watch as the cherry slips onto the floor, and Lucifer suppresses the chuckle that bubbles up.

"Speaking of: are *you* wasted?"

"Ha-ha-HA!" Alastor narrows his eyes in response. "What a notion. I have never experienced intoxication."

Lucifer launches another cherry, and he jerks back this time, but it hits him right on the nose (splat).

"Stop that right now." Alastor threatens.

"Or *what?"*

They stare at each other tersely, and Alastor's hand twitches on his whiskey glass, but he doesn't respond to his goading.

"Tell me your request." He says instead. Lucifer rolls his eyes, and he nestles deeper into his armchair.

"What's yours?" He counters.

"Tell me yours."

"Yours."

"You -" Alastor's smile wavers, and he looks visibly exasperated. "What *exactly* are you playing at?"

Somehow, his annoyance is amusing Lucifer to no end, and he wants to push it a little. See how much he can piss him off before Alastor tries to throttle him.

So Lucifer points at his cup on the table.

"Top me up, and I'll tell you."

Alastor bristles at the command, looking indignant, and Lucifer enjoys it. Likes seeing Alastor get all riled up in a low stakes situation, because when he does, his smile sharpens, his pupils dilate, his deer ears twitch testily, and he's just so much more,

more,

more,

more,

more,

MORE.

"You are being quite tyrannical tonight." He clenches his jaw, but he twists the cap off unsteadily, free-pours the whiskey into the cup -

- except he misses, and it completely sloshes onto the floor. Lucifer has to grab onto the bottle to stop Alastor from pouring any more, and he hurriedly cleans up the spill with a wave of his hand.

"Uh, you're definitely drunk!"

"That is simply not possible." Alastor sounds snappier by the second.

"You literally missed my cup."

"Just a momentary lapse in judgment."

"Yeah, right. Who's the mess *now,* douchebag?"

BANG!

Alastor drops the whiskey bottle down onto the table, irritation visible, and he bolts out of his seat towards Lucifer - slams his hands on both of his armrests - puts his face right in front of his -

"Between the two of us," he growls, "it will always be *you."*

Alastor towers over him, arms boxing him in completely, and he's so big that he practically blocks out the light from above. Their legs bump up against each other, calves grazing every time they move, but-

more importantly-

Lucifer can't stop staring into Alastor's glowing red eyes.

"Uhhhhhhhh." is his smooth response.

"Are you even listening?" Alastor sounds impatient. "Pay attention, *Lucifer."*

He reels back into the present when he hears his name, and his five senses kick-start into focus:

the taste of maraschino cherries in his mouth, saccharine sweet;

the smoky scent emitting from the green flames;

the sound of jazz playing in the background, fast and hurried;

the sight of red, black, red, black;

the touch of Alastor's bare ankle brushing against his own.

And his brain fixates on the one thing he's wanted to ask, something that's been on his mind all-day-all-night like an irresistible siren call, whispering at him incessantly.

"HERE'SMYREQUEST!" Lucifer blurts out. "You wanna know, right?"

Alastor squints at him, but eventually nods, and he roots around his brain for his last lucid thought.

"Tell me… just... what were you trying to say? On the rooftop."

He doesn't elaborate, but Alastor seems to understand what he's referencing. His hands squeeze tighter on Lucifer's chair, gripping on like it's his lifeline.

"Is that *really* what you want to use your request on?"

His voice has an edge to it.

But Lucifer is determined to peek behind the curtains of Alastor's mind.

"Yeah."

It's met with a resigned sigh. He's still looming over him; Lucifer can feel his warmth emitting out of his body; everything is too hot all of a sudden, and he has the urge to take his vest off.

"So be it." Alastor leans down, and his red hair grazes Lucifer's cheekbone. "Explain something to me."

His voice is lowered, clandestine.

"Why do you care about me? You…" Alastor points a finger at him. "…have so much fear. So scared that I'll leave."

Uncertainty passes through Alastor's eyes.

"Which begs the question."

He stops here. Hesitates.

And then he speaks his sentence so quietly, it's practically inaudible.

"Why do you even want me to stay?"

Alastor looks at him, and it's too much.

Lucifer feels dizzy - unstable - the alcohol certainly isn't helping - none of this is what he expected - he puts his hand over his eyes, not wanting to see him anymore. Truthfully, Alastor is a walking, talking collection of contradictions. Cruel, yet thoughtful. Dismissive, but observant. He's mesmerizing; multi-faceted; magnetic;

and Lucifer still wants to measure the curve of his smile with a protractor. What's up with that?

Don't you FUCKING dare say any of this, he threatens himself. Even in the swirling whirlpool of his brain, he knows that it's too much.

So he ends up saying something worse:

"You take up so much space in my head." Lucifer keeps his hand over his eyes. "I'll be doing something else, and I think about you. I'll be with other people, and I want to see you."

It's met with utter silence.

And the song on the radio screeches to a halt.

"I don't -" Lucifer's voice breaks for a second. "I can't -"

He feels weird - can't bear to see Alastor's reaction, so he doesn't. He's got both hands on his face now, and he's incapable of expressing the tangled mess inside his head. "Can we talk about this when I'm not drunk out of my mind?"

Fortunately, Alastor doesn't push. He lets go of his armrests instead, and Lucifer can hear him walk away, his shoes clicking on the floor.

"Well now." Alastor's voice sounds far away. "I thought you weren't drunk."

The music starts up again, slow and introspective.

"I thought so too." Lucifer mumbles. His hands are still on his face, so he doesn't notice that Alastor is looking at him with a strange expression.

And the radio continues to play, but Lucifer's not in the mood to listen.

“Thanks for cleaning up with me, Vaggie.” Charlie shakes a hand to make the slot machines vanish, and she sighs at the mess. “I don’t know what I’d do without you.”

“Charlie, it’s fine if you want to ask for help. I mean, you planned all this.”

“Yeah, but I just want everyone to have a good time!” Charlie starts sweeping up the floors, and Vaggie helps hold the dustbin. “Do you think my dad and Alastor enjoyed it?”

“Those two?” Vaggie thinks for a second. “Probably. I mean, they were really into the games.”

“Right.” Charlie is suddenly struck by the memory of Lucifer’s red shirt, which coincidentally matched the colour of Alastor’s shirt. “Into… the games.”

“Charlie.” Vaggie steps closer, her heels click-clacking on the ground. “What’s on your mind?”

“Um…” Truthfully, she doesn’t know how to say it. She has a wiggling thought in her brain, a mere seed of a hypothesis, and she leans on her broom. “Vaggie. Do you think… I mean, it’s great that my dad and Alastor are friends now! But I was wondering if I’m missing something?”

“Missing?” Vaggie echoes. “Like what?”

“Like, what was up with Angel, my dad, and Alastor at the poker game?” Charlie gestures wildly at the felt table, still covered in heaps of discarded casino coins. “I felt like maybe I witnessed something I shouldn’t have.”

“Isn’t that just how Angel acts?”

“Yeah, but that’s not how *Alastor* acts.” Charlie sighs. “Oh, I don’t know. I guess I’m just thinking too much.”

“No, Charlie.” Vaggie says quickly. “Whatever it is, I’ll help you out.”

Charlie smiles at this. “Thanks, Vaggie. I mean, If you could keep an eye out for my dad and Alastor, that would be nice. But no pressure!”

“You can leave it to me.” Vaggie nods determinedly. “I will watch over them like a hawk.”

“Well, you don’t have to work that hard.” Charlie says, holding Vaggie’s hand affectionately. “Although, it’s already so much better with you on my side!”

Charlie presses a brief kiss on her cheek, and they grin at each other.

Niffty senses something.

She turns around, but the hallway is so dimly lit that she can only see her own shadow. She tilts her head, trying to listen for footsteps; all she can hear is the faint melody of Alastor's radio, emitting from the floor above.

"Huh." Niffty shrugs. "Nothing to worry about!"

She skips forward to the beat of the song, humming the whole time.

And she fails to notice the figure trailing behind her.

They don't speak afterwards.

Although, it's a little surprising that Lucifer hasn't left. He merely sits and drinks away, motioning his cup at Alastor whenever he wants a refill.

They've gone through most of the bottle at this point, and Lucifer's skin is a bit flushed. There's a dreamy expression on his face as he glances over at Alastor, eyes unfocused.

"God, I could drink this all night."

It's the first thing he's said in a while.

“Heavens. You seem unaware that you *have* been drinking it all night.” Alastor replies dryly. Lucifer flings another cherry at him, but he’s too out of it to dodge, so it hits his cheek (splat).

“HAH!” Lucifer laughs a bit too loudly. “That never gets old.”

“Oh, only to you.” He says, peeved. Lucifer rolls his eyes and resumes drinking, which gives him time to contemplate over his earlier response.

It had left him with more questions than answers.

He wants to see me? He thinks about me? Alastor mulls over this. *What a ridiculous concept.*

The most unfathomable issue is why Lucifer has even an iota of affection for him. But hearing him say those words made Alastor’s heart quiver, for a moment. For just a second.

And it’s a familiar feeling, yet somehow it’s not. Alastor has been in many situations where he’s met close calls with death. He’s fought against enemies who aimed to kill. He’s snuffed out the lives of powerful overlords.

It’s just - this sensation is notably different. Still tense. Still nerve-wracking. Somehow equally worse and better than fighting.

“Try to get *this!”*

Lucifer throws another red cherry at his face - which he manages to catch in his hand. He feels absurdly proud that he's able to grab it, *especially* when his head is swirling around like water down the drain.

“It appears that you have a death wish this evening.” Alastor cleans himself with his handkerchief. “Why don’t you - ”

He loses his train of thought, because -

the sight of Lucifer distracts him. He had taken off his white vest sometime during the night,

and…

his pink shirt is unbuttoned about halfway, his neck and chest partially uncovered, skin glowing even under the dim lighting.

“What’re you lookin’ at.” Lucifer gazes at him, and Alastor jolts, not expecting to get caught. He smoothes out his expression anyway, and he points at Lucifer’s shirt.

“You appear to have missed some buttons. What a careless display.”

Lucifer’s eyes follow the direction of his finger before he shrugs dismissively.

“It’s hot here. And, you know what? This is called having style. Not that *you* would know.”

It’s remarkable how easily they slip back into repartee, but Alastor can’t help the twinge of annoyance at Lucifer’s fighting words.

“Ha-HA! Allow me to show you what a little *pizzazz* looks like.”

Alastor pulls his jacket off his shoulders and throws it at him. It slaps Lucifer’s face, and he yanks it off indignantly.

“HEY! What the hell was that for?!”

“Wear it.” Alastor demands coolly. “Perhaps you’ll finally develop some fashion sense, hmm?”

Lucifer shoots him a withering glare, but he tugs the jacket on anyway. It practically swallows him up, and he has to roll up the sleeves a few times.

“Okay, this is way too big.”

“How shrewd of you to notice the difference in our stature.”

Lucifer scowls, but he doesn’t take the jacket off. Instead, he grabs his white vest from the back of the chair and tosses it at him.

“You have no idea what looks good. Try this on for size, asshole.”

“And why should I?”

“Oh, get off your high horse and put it on, *Alastor.”* Lucifer drawls, and the sound of his name hits him strangely, right in the chest.

And, as though he were possessed, he finds himself pulling it on.

It’s obviously too small. Alastor can barely even work it past his shoulders, and Lucifer cackles so uproariously there’s tears coming out from his eyes.

“Oh my GOD,” he wheezes, "you look so stupid.”

Alastor yanks the vest off, aggravation threatening to boil over. “You are quite ill-mannered. Return my jacket, then.”

Lucifer smirks at him.

“Make me.”

Without even planning on it, they both stand up.

Alastor’s balance is unsteady, but he lunges anyway - Lucifer steps back - the effects of alcohol hit him hard, his head reeling, and he grabs onto his chair for balance.

“WOW! You can barely even stand up straight!” Lucifer laughs loudly. It echoes in his room, boisterous and full of glee.

“Neither can you.” Alastor grits out. It’s the truth; Lucifer stumbles over his feet as he swerves away, and he has to take a second to reposition himself.

“At least I can still do *this.”*

He grabs Alastor’s lapels and shoves him back.

“Is that *all* the King of Hell can do?”

Alastor flicks Lucifer’s forehead.

“OW!” Lucifer huffs. “Okay, you’re in for it now.”

They spring into action, throwing fists that they narrowly dodge, and every step Alastor takes is heavy. Leaden. Laborious. But he keeps going at it, keeps fighting this mock brawl because it’s -

It’s fun.

Fun watching Lucifer’s face scrunch up from annoyance, trying to focus; feeling the weight behind his punches, strong and firm; hearing him grumble without any real vitriol; smelling that hint of temptation that always accompanies him; tasting the palpable tension in the air.

“You have yet to properly land a hit on me.” Alastor taunts.

“Watch your back then, bitch!”

Lucifer dodges Alastor’s blow, but in the midst of it he trips over his own feet and starts free-falling backwards and his eyes widen and instinctively Alastor’s hand shoots out to reach for him and -

Lucifer grabs his hand onto his.

They fit together perfectly, and,

(Alastor doesn’t even know who did this first,)

their fingers intertwine.

They clutch at each other steadfastly, red fingers interlaced with dark grey, and it shocks his system. He looks at Lucifer’s hand… to his chest… to his neck… to his lips… to his eyes…

It’s true that they’ve held hands before. But not like this. And he should yank his hand away, yet he can’t, *doesn’t want to,* instead gripping onto Lucifer's hand even tighter.

“It appears I’ve saved you, once again - ” Alastor slips on a discarded cherry, tumbling them both onto the floor in a sprawled heap. Lucifer winces at the impact, and he’s trapped underneath Alastor’s much larger frame.

“OW! Ugh. What a hero.” He says sarcastically. “Get off of me. You’re heavy.”

Alastor pushes himself up, his hands on either side of Lucifer's head. "We only ended up in this predicament because of *you."*

But when he looks down, he realizes they're close. *Alarmingly* close. It's not what he planned, definitely not what's supposed to happen, Lucifer still pinned underneath his body and their fingers entwined so -

Alastor lets go.

Stands up as fast as he can.

He doesn't offer to help him up.

And Lucifer pulls himself up on his own.

They stare uneasily at each other, red eyes into gold, the jazz on the radio turning fast and tense. Alastor takes a step away another step another step step step step *step,* backs up all the way until he knocks against his chair, and he can't move any further.

The music from the radio crescendoes, resembling the sound of an alarm. Lucifer clears his throat, his eyes darting between Alastor and the door.

"Shit - are you - I mean - " Whatever he sees in Alastor's expression makes him inch towards the exit. "I HAVE TO GO."

He practically sprints out of the room.

And Alastor doesn't stop him.

Lucifer paces down the hall, and the pleasant buzz of alcohol becomes an absolute hindrance when he can't stand up straight. In his haste to leave, he realizes that he's still wearing Alastor's suit jacket.

"Fuck!"

He leans against the wall, sliding downwards until he's crouching on the floor. It had been almost suffocating in Alastor's room, and he can't stop thinking about the press of Alastor's

body against his, the brief touch between their ankles, the way their fingers intertwined -

His face heats up.

“Am I the world’s biggest idiot?” Lucifer mutters. “What the hell am I doing. He’s gotta be uncomfortable.”

He can’t read Alastor’s mind, so Lucifer has to piece it together based on his physical reactions - the way he jerked back, stepped aside, allowed him to leave. It had been a good night, until it wasn’t.

He must have overstepped Alastor’s boundaries.

I should say sorry. Lucifer thinks. *No, wait, he hates apologies. Shit. I should still go back though, and…*

He’s not sure what exactly he should do. But he doesn’t want to end the conversation this way.

“Alright. Get back in there, dumbass.” Lucifer mutters.

And after giving himself this Terrible Pep Talk™, he turns back.

Alastor polishes off the rest of the whiskey.

He sits down on his chair. Stands up. Walks around his room. Sits on his bed. Gets back up. He’s restless, moving back and forth like a pendulum, and he can still feel phantom traces of Lucifer’s touch on his skin, somehow -

~~*it felt good*~~

Alastor jumps at the thought, horrified that it crossed his mind, appalled that he really, truly feels that way, and he’s so wrapped up in his head that he walks right into his bookcase.

“Stupid… piece of shit… bookcase.” Alastor swears uncharacteristically, his anger spiking at the inanimate object.

His head is spinning, alcohol coursing through his veins, and he furiously digs his claws into the shelf. He has half a mind to rip the whole thing down when his eyes lock on to the pair of rubber ducks on the shelf.

And his wrath dissipates.

“You.” He carefully picks up the Lucifer duck, so tiny in his hand. “What is your goal here?”

The duck doesn’t respond, and Alastor puts it back down.

“Aren’t you uncooperative.” He mutters. “Well. If that is how you want to play it.”

Alastor takes sweeping steps over to his door. Yanks it open, making up his mind to go look for him-

but Lucifer’s already at the door, his hand up like he’s just about to knock.

“Oh! Uh. Fancy meeting you here.” He has on such an uncomfortable smile, it almost makes Alastor laugh.

“Well now.” He composes himself. “Did you forget something?”

“Something like that.” Lucifer sounds apprehensive. Fidgets for a moment. And then his face clears up, as though he were just struck by an idea.

“RIGHT! We came in here for a reason. What was your request?”

“Ah.” He looks away. “That.”

He had nearly forgotten about it.

“We…” Alastor drops his hand from the doorknob. “… don’t need to get into that tonight.”

Lucifer looks at him with surprise. “What? No! Let’s just - come on. I’ll do whatever you want.”

There’s a strange hint of urgency in his voice, and it makes Alastor’s mind flounder. Because he knows what request to make.

He just doesn’t want to say it.

Even so, he feels his sense of control slipping through his hands like sand in an hourglass; he’s light-headed, the whiskey not helping, and there’s a hazy, soft tint to everything. It almost makes Lucifer look luminous.

Alastor runs his hands through his hair, yanking at it. Brings his hands down to his neck, evading eye contact. And he finally caves in to something he’s wanted for a long, long time.

“Your promise.” He says, at last.

And Lucifer just.

Understands.

They're back in Alastor's room, the door shut, and they stand there for a while. Like they're sizing each other up, almost.

"How…" Lucifer clears his throat. "How do you want to do it?"

"Oh? Are there other methods I am not aware of?" Alastor replies, full of snark.

"HA-HA, very funny, asshole. I meant, do you want me to come to you, or are you gonna come over, or…"

He trails off, and Alastor lifts an eyebrow.

"You are making this *much* harder than it needs to be."

"Well, you're not moving at all! Are we just - are you gonna *come* or what?"

Lucifer's face starts to turn red - either from embarrassment, or anger. Alastor can't tell at this point. But watching him act like he normally does is oddly comforting, and he feels more at ease to continue his request.

Alastor beckons him over with his finger.

"Why don't *you* come, then."

"Fine."

"Excellent!"

"Stop trying to have the last word." Lucifer huffs, but he walks up anyway. Stands right in front of Alastor. Lifts up his arms.

And then falters.

"You sure?" Lucifer's eyebrows are knitted with worry, but Alastor has reached new levels of impatience.

“Enough is enough.”

In one fluid motion, Alastor brings him into his chest.

Lucifer squeaks at the impact, but he hurriedly places his hands onto Alastor’s waist. He’s warm, just like he remembered, and he’s a little more familiar with his shape now: the sharpness, the contours. Lucifer moves his hands to the small of his back, and it’s admittedly, nice.

Definitely nice.

But not…

sufficient?

Alastor tugs him in closer from confusion. It’s still not quite… he needs more, somehow.

Lucifer pats him rapidly to get his attention.

“Any tighter and you’re gonna squeeze me to death.” He says, muffled. His face is basically crushed against Alastor’s chest at this point.

“Oh? I did not realize it was *this* easy to kill you.” Still, Alastor releases him from his iron grip, and Lucifer wheezes, gasping for air.

“God. Give - give me a moment.”

They’re across from each other, not touching, not moving, and Alastor is unsatisfied.

Deeply, *deeply* unsatisfied.

When Lucifer finally catches his breath, he straightens up to look at him. “So, uh. Are we done?”

Yes, he wants to say.

You can go now, he tries to say.

But then he drags his eyes over the smooth expanse of Lucifer’s skin, his confused yet curious expression, the red pins still tucked in his hair. He’s wearing Alastor’s suit jacket, the sleeves starting to roll down, too long for his arms, and what he *actually* says is:

“No.”

Alastor takes a step back, and Lucifer follows. He sits down on his chair, and Lucifer tilts his head. Every time he makes a move, Lucifer makes a move, and he feels a surprising thrill at that fact.

“What now?” Lucifer asks.

And he surrenders to his baser instincts.

He snatches Lucifer's arm - pulls him so hard he sprawls onto his lap - Lucifer gasps at this but doesn't stop him, just hurriedly places his hands on Alastor's shoulders to balance.

"What are you doing?" Lucifer sounds bewildered.

"Closer." Alastor mumbles, and he doesn't really speak properly, can't formulate his thoughts at all because every part of him is screaming at him to get his hands on Lucifer -

Alastor grabs his waist, runs his hands down

further….

and…

further…

slowly but steadily dragging his fingers over every inch of him, taking his time to skim past his narrow hips, trace over his thighs, and he digs in to the surprising musculature of Lucifer's legs - pulls him closer until they knock against each other - chest bumping into chest -

"Woah." Lucifer says dazedly. "I don't think I've ever seen your eyes so close before."

Alastor lets out a frustrated noise, not in the right head-space to form sentences.

And Lucifer is fully sitting on his lap now.

Alastor drags his hands off of his thighs, and back up, up, up, clutching Lucifer's tiny waist with a firm grip. At this proximity, he can smell his faint scent of temptation, so intoxicating that he has to fight the urge to bury his face onto Lucifer's neck and breathe him in.

Still, it's good, *really* good, *fuck* that feels good -

Lucifer slides his hands off Alastor's shoulders to wrap his arms around him instead, and if it was good before it's even *better* with more physical contact.

And Alastor has no idea why he denied himself this for so long when it's the only thing that feels right.

They sit in this position for a while, Lucifer on Alastor's lap, and eventually he feels appeased enough to loosen his grip. The sound of jazz steadies into a soothing tune in the background, soft and whimsical, and Lucifer unwraps his arms from his shoulders.

He leans away a little, not to create distance, but rather to study Alastor's face. "Huh. You know, it took you a while to ask for another hug."

"Have you been looking forward to it?" He bites back, expecting this to be another verbal sparring session.

It isn't, though. Lucifer looks at him seriously, his gold eyes clear and determined.

“And if I said yes?”

The music terminates.

“Come again?”

Alastor can’t stop his radio filter from slipping off, and he drops his hands from Lucifer's waist. He opens his mouth, unsure of what to say.

Luckily and unluckily, he doesn’t have to, because that’s when they hear a scream.

“What the *hell* was that?!” Vaggie jumps down from the stairs with her angelic spear. There’s a massive gold portal, glowing in the middle of the room, and standing in front of it is someone awfully familiar.

“Lute.” Vaggie grits out of her teeth. Lute turns around, her eyes blazing with fury.

“Well, well, well. If it isn’t the weakling.”

“What are you plotting?” Vaggie directs her spear at her. “Answer me now, or you’ll have hell to pay.”

“Oh, I’m not here to fight, *Vagina.”* Lute sneers, and Vaggie snarls at the name. “I’m just grabbing something that’s owed to me.”

She holds Niffty in her hands, who isn’t even trying to escape; instead, she shrieks in delight, and she’s definitely the source of the scream from earlier.

“Niffty!” Vaggie yells. “Let go of her!”

“I don’t think so.” Lute says. “I have other plans for her.”

Niffty claps excitedly, and she points at Lute. “Vaggie, look! I found a bad girl!”

“Niffty - can you just - she’s about to kidnap you!” Vaggie groans.

“Oh.”

Niffty looks less pleased now.

“And since you can’t come to Heaven without a portal, I guess I won’t be seeing you. Good riddance.” Lute smirks.

“Don’t you dare, bitch!” Vaggie throws her spear at her -

But its too late.

They’ve already made it through the portal, and it spasms shut.

Chapter End Notes

Here’s me dropping a longer chapter on your lap! I almost cut this shorter to put the hug for the next chapter, but I decided not to. Also I just adore how excited you were about the added Heat!!

Fun facts:
- I can’t believe the last time they hugged was ch. 11 what the hell.
- The chapter title is, of course, referring to their promise!
- This is the 3rd time Lucifer has said Alastor’s name (ch. 8, ch. 12, ch. 16.)
- The rooftop scene is from ch. 14.
- This time, I have Alastor falling on Lucifer (parallel to the staircase scene in ch. 7).
- The radio acts as a metaphor for Alastor again, reflecting his mood!
- Alastor avoided answering his questions in ch. 8 and ch. 13, but now he just responds!
- "Measuring the curve of of his smile with a protractor" is a callback to ch. 12
- Alastor flicks his forehead again, parallels Lucifer doing it to him (ch. 12), and Alastor also did it in ch. 13

Please leave your theories/suggestions in the comments! See you next Friday <3

The Harp

Chapter Notes

CH. 17 FANART:
- drawn by @dirtgrubber
- drawn by @fullychaotichell
- drawn by @starkspi
- drawn by @taschamix
- drawn by @of-spaceships-and-cats
- drawn by @vesselslut
- drawn by @twosoulss77
- drawn by @ameliathetadclover
- drawn by @hawks-stan
- drawn by @elkaseltzer: 1 + 2
- drawn by @3ggsnbutter
- drawn by @0-cloud-puff-0: 1 + 2

I LOVE IT! Send me any fanart via Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or my Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Welcome to Heaven, trash."

Lute has Niffty in her hands by the outskirts of Cherub Towne. She's gripping onto the nape of her neck, and Niffty looks around in wonder.

"WOAH! It's so gold here!" Niffty shrieks. She doesn't have even a modicum of fear, and Lute is starting to get really pissed off.

"You…" Lute squints at her. "Do you even know what's going to happen to you?"

"Are we sightseeing?"

"No."

"Killing bugs!"

"Closer."

Lute brings her right up to her face. "Sera forbade me to kill down in Hell. But there's nothing stopping me from killing you up in Heaven."

Niffty looks giddy at the notion. "Oh, MURDER! I like being in pain."

“You fucking little…” Lute can’t help but recoil. “What the hell is wrong with you?”

“Ooh, you sound like such a bad girl. I love it!” Niffty cackles, her laughter loud and cruel. “But I wanna kill some bugs first. I’m going to go look for them.”

And Niffty -

licks Lute’s hand -

“GROSS!” Lute drops her, and Niffty hops down onto the clouds.

“I’m off now!” Niffty says cheerfully. “I’ll be back once I’ve cleaned up this place.”

And she scampers away into the distance, lightning-fast.

“SHIT!” Lute flies into the sky, and she hurriedly looks for her. “I shouldn’t have underestimated her. That little brat is so - ”

“Lute.”

Lute flinches at the sound of her name. She turns around to face Sera, who looks incredibly displeased.

“You were supposed to report to me once you came back. Did you find anything?”

Right. Lute *had* told Sera that she went down to look for Adam. It may have been a fruitless endeavour, but it brought her some closure to find his shirt, buried deep within the rubble. She takes out the scrap of gold cloth and presents it to Sera. “This is all that was left of Adam, your highness.”

“I see.” Sera picks it up gingerly, and then puts the cloth back into Lute’s hands. “Anything else?”

“Nothing of importance.” Lute says. She glances back to the ground, trying to find that pesky little girl.

But Niffty’s gone.

“So, Niffty has been kidnapped.” Vaggie paces back and forth in the parlour. “Any ideas on how to get her back?”

“Can’t you just summon Niff?” Husk directs this to Alastor. He snaps his red fingers, but nothing happens.

“Hmm. There appears to be *something* in Heaven that prevents me from doing so.”

“Okay, let’s just all put our heads together and think about what to do.” Charlie says worriedly. “I mean, Niffty must be feeling so scared and alone!”

They all stand there silently for a moment. Although Alastor appears unbothered, his deer ears are completely flattened on his head, and his smile looks strained.

Right. He’s close with Niffty. Lucifer thinks, peeking over at him. Alastor is standing across the room beside Rosie, and,

as though he can sense Lucifer’s gaze,

he looks over.

It catches him off guard, but neither of them look away. And even though it’s a little awkward in the wake of everything, he can’t help but also feel relieved that they’re okay - they’re good with each other. They can make eye contact and maintain it. Lucifer considers walking over to him, but he focuses on the task at hand.

“Okay. I got an idea.” Lucifer’s commanding tone draws everyone’s attention onto him. “I’ll set up a meeting with Sera, which guarantees that she’ll open a portal for us.”

“Like… a conference? For what, dad?” Charlie asks.

“Well, we usually meet to discuss about Heaven and Hell. So I’ll call her at the Heaven Embassy today.”

“Hey! Should you really be talkin’ to her?” Angel Dust says worriedly. “She could be involved!”

“I don’t think so.” He shakes his head. “This… isn’t really her style. I think that exorcist - Lyre, was it? - she’s probably doing this on her own. But y'know, it doesn't hurt to be careful. We still have no idea why Heaven took Niffty."

Lucifer thinks for a moment. "And we should have two groups of people go up.”

“Two?” Vaggie repeats, and he nods.

“Yeah. One team will distract them, and the other will look for Niffty.”

“Oh!” Charlie’s eyes light up. “I get it now. I’ll go up and talk to Sera, then. Maybe we can discuss about how we can peacefully coexist. Vaggie, pleaaaaassseee come with? Your

perspective can be really helpful for the meeting, since you've lived in both Heaven and Hell."

Vaggie balks at this. "O… okay, sweetie. I guess that makes sense."

"I guess we'll be the decoy team." Charlie places a finger on her chin. "We still need someone to look for Niffty."

Without missing a beat, Alastor pipes in:

"Who else could it be but me?"

"You?" Vaggie says doubtfully. "Alastor, I'm not sure if Heaven will let you up. You're literally a bloodthirsty overlord."

"And that is precisely why!" Alastor puts his hand on his chest. "If those angels ask, we can declare that I am the acting leader for these depraved sinners. You should know that my words have power down here!"

"If we assign you as the representative for demons, we can say that we're just looking for opinions from all perspectives." Charlie says thoughtfully. "Okay, so one member of royalty, one angel, and one demon. Since Heaven provided me with a tour last time, I'll ask them to do it for you, Alastor! That way you can look for Niffty…"

She trails off, and looks over at Lucifer. "Dad, you should come too. You and *Alastor* can look for Niffty. Together!"

There's something suggestive in her tone, but Lucifer can't pinpoint what it is. He sends her a rueful smile and shakes his head.

"I absolutely would, Charlie, but *technically*, I was exiled. I'll still ask if I can come, but I might not be allowed in."

"Is that so?" Alastor cuts in. "Too afraid to break Heaven's rules? Such irony."

"Hey!" Lucifer shoots him a glare. "They've got a lotta rules, okay? And the amount of paperwork is a huge pain in the ass. You really don't want to go against them."

Alastor walks towards him -

"Hmm. So you have been defeated by bureaucracy. I must admit, I am a little disappointed that you give up so easily."

Lucifer walks up as well -

"I didn't *give up."*

They stand right in front of each other, Lucifer with his arms crossed, Alastor with his hand on his radio cane.

“So now you are a coward *and* a liar.”

Lucifer scowls, which makes Alastor smile harder for some reason. “Fine. FINE! I’m gonna make you eat your words. I’ll be there even if it kills me.”

“Oh?” Alastor’s deer ears perk up. “Is that a guarantee? Or just an empty promise?”

“A GUARANTEE.”

When Lucifer turns away, he’s startled to find that everyone - Angel Dust, Charlie, Vaggie, Husk, and Rosie - is staring at the two of them.

“W… what is it?” Lucifer asks nervously.

As though breaking a spell, his question makes them all look away and start talking at once.

“Oh, look at the time - ”

“My shop, I have to go back to my shop - ”

“Okay, let’s start packing for Heaven - ”

None of them make direct eye contact with him, and he’s not sure if he should feel offended. He glances over at Alastor, wondering if *he* knew what was up, but at this point he had already moved on. In the midst of the hubbub, Alastor taps Rosie’s shoulder.

“Rosie, dear. Shall I walk you out?”

“Oh, Alastor. Always a gentleman!” Rosie nods politely towards the hotel staff. “Thank you for the lovely night, and good luck with poor Niffty.”

They walk away, arm-in-arm, and Lucifer watches their backs recede into the distance. He feels that familiar pang of spite again, which makes him sigh - look away - plunk a lid on his mangled emotions so that he can work on getting Niffty back.

Lucifer summons up a portal. “Charlie, dear. I’m heading to the Embassy now. I’ll contact Sera using the hologram there.”

“Oh. That place? Where I met Adam, right?” Charlie looks a bit annoyed at the memory. “Sure thing, dad. Let me know what happens!”

“I will!” Lucifer’s about to leave when Charlie grabs his arm. “Huh?”

Charlie looks a bit torn, her gaze flipping between Lucifer’s face and his clothing.

“Dad, um. Are you… cold?”

“What?”

Charlie points at him.

“The jacket.”

He looks at his sleeve, and -

fucking hell, he’s wearing Alastor’s black suit jacket, still oversized, still lined with an argyle print, and still 100% not his property. They all scrambled to meet in the parlour after hearing Niffty’s scream, and he had forgotten that he was wearing it.

“OH!” With a wave of his hands, he changes his outfit to his usual ensemble. “No. We were just. Uhhhhhhh.”

Angel Dust has a shit-eating grin on his face. “You were just *what?”*

Lucifer opens his mouth, closes it, and he starts sweating under their scrutiny. The last thing he wants to do is tell his daughter *and her friends* about what he did in the middle of the night.

Besides. How can he even explain what happened? *Alastor and I were just talking/fighting/hugging/errrrrrrrrr/hmmmm* -

“NEVER MIND!”

He bolts through the portal.

“Alastor, do let me know once you get Niffty back.” Rosie says. “I know you have some fondness for her.”

“Niffty?” Alastor pauses. “Well. It would be best not to underestimate her. She is quite twisted, that one. I’m sure Heaven is already regretting having her, ha-ha!”

They make it to the hotel entrance, but before Alastor can bid Rosie adieu, Angel Dust (while dragging a Visibly Reluctant Husk) runs up to them.

“Hey, Rosie! Can you share your contact info?” He thrusts his phone into her hands, and she smiles widely at him.

“Of course, darling! Message me anytime.”

Alastor watches their interaction with some befuddlement. As Rosie put her digits in, he taps his radio cane on the floor to get their attention.

“Now, now. What are you all up to?”

“We just hit it off! Nothin’ else to it.” Angel Dust drapes an arm around her shoulder, and another arm around Husk. “Ain’t that right?”

“Absolutely.” Rosie pats Angel Dust’s hand. “The three of us really bonded after you and his royal majesty left last night.”

“What an *inspiring* tale of friendship and new connections!” Alastor doesn’t mean a single word he’s saying. In fact, he’s overflowing with suspicion. He looks over at Rosie for an explanation, but she merely smiles at him.

“Speaking of, what did you and Lucifer do afterwards?” Angel Dust asks. “You snuck off all of a sudden.”

Alastor narrows his eyes at the question, but Angel Dust’s face looks carefully blank, a mask of casual nonchalance.

“Oh, nothing particularly exciting. He was just a little hungry.” Alastor materializes a cup of cherries in his hands. “So I gave him some of these.”

“Cherries?” Angel Dust exclaims. He reaches over to grab one of the stems, and he dangles it in front of his face. “Wow! This brings me back. Y’know, they told me to tie one of these for a video.”

Angel Dust puts it in his mouth; after a few seconds, he sticks his tongue out to reveal the knotted stem.

“Like this!” Angel Dust takes the cherry stalk out, and Husk sighs.

“Why am I not surprised that *you* would know how to do it.”

“And what do you mean by that, Husker?” Alastor asks. They all seem surprised by his participation in the conversation, but Angel Dust answers anyway.

“Don’t you know what they say about people who can tie knots in cherry stems?” Angel Dust wiggles his eyebrows suggestively. “They’re good with their *mouth.”*

The sight of Lucifer’s forked tongue slams into Alastor’s mind, knocking out every other thought he has, and he recalls with vivid clarity how perfectly he had tied the cherry stem, *just a fun li’l party trick,* Lucifer had said, *seems to be a big hit whenever I do it -*

He’s so caught up in his recollection that he loses his grip on the glass, and it breaks into a million pieces on the ground.

“Alastor!” Rosie shrieks. “Are you alright?”

“Just swell, my dear!” Alastor says brightly. He snaps his fingers to get rid of the mess, but he still feels disoriented, and -

truthfully -

the implication makes him feel a little out of his element.

And it’s like the floodgates are open, and he’s awash with the memories of the night before, Lucifer’s warm body, his flushed skin, their private words, his heavy stare. Too much touching.

Not enough, actually, his mind whispers, and he wants to kill that little voice inside his head.

Angel Dust keeps talking, unaware of Alastor’s inner turmoil. “Y’know, I’m the best kisser in the studio. I’ve even won awards for it!”

“Self-given awards?” Husk says dryly.

“Real awards!” Angel Dust protests. “I’ll show you. Why don’t you give this ride a try, baby?”

“That is enough of that.” Alastor says, thoroughly uninterested in the rest of the conversation. “I will be leaving for the rest of the day.”

“Now, where are you heading, Alastor?” Rosie asks curiously. He looks askance at her, not wanting to divulge what he’s up to.

“Just handling a little something!”

Alastor teleports away using his shadow.

“I bet he’s looking for Lucifer.” Angel Dust says.

“Oh, no doubt about that, darling.” Rosie replies, and they both laugh conspiratorially. “Let’s discuss the cherry stem question, shall we? What do you think of that?”

“I’m thinking that the king was demonstrating it last night. Unless Alastor has some weird obsession with fruit? You tell me, Rosie.”

“Well, well. He doesn’t care for sweet things.” Rosie explains. “So it’ll have to be the first one.”

They look at each other deviously, and Husk slaps his hand over his face.

“You two are in way over ya heads. Don’t come crying to me if he tries to kill you.”

“Oh, don’t you worry, Husk.” Rosie says. “He’ll thank us in the future. Besides, you’re part of this too, aren’t you?”

Husk opens his mouth, and then closes it. “I… fuck. I guess you’re right about that.”

“Alright, next part in our plan: flirting with Alastor.” Angel Dust looks a little uncomfortable at the idea. “Rosie, you’re gonna have to protect me though.”

“You can count on me, dear.” Rosie nods determinedly. “Once they’re back from Heaven, we’ll commence!”

Emily is organizing some files inside the office when a hologram appears. The connection is a bit shaky and makes the edges of the projection blurry, so she doesn’t immediately recognize the figure.

“Hi!” Emily peers at the hologram. “Who are you?”

“Oh, uh. It’s… Lucifer?” Lucifer looks back at her curiously. “Who are *you?* Where’s Sera?”

“Lucifer?” Emily repeats. “Oh, I know you!”

His name is infamous in Heaven - the banished angel, the fallen one, the rebellious dreamer who brought in destruction. But as she’s looking at him, all she can think of is that he and Charlie look so much alike.

“You’re Charlie’s dad, right? I’m Emily, but I go by any name. All nicknames are welcome! And Sera’s out right now, but I can help you!” Emily says cheerfully. Her exuberance seems

to catch Lucifer off-guard, and he hesitates for a second before speaking.

“I wanted to ask if I could set up a meeting to resolve some of the issues between Heaven and Hell. My daughter - Charlie, as you already know - she’ll be the one handling it, along with a few others.”

“Ooh!” Emily nods vigorously. “That sounds great! Yes, come up, come up. I would love to see Charlie again.”

“Really?” Lucifer tilts his head to the side. “You… just like that?”

“Well, yeah! I care about all human souls, so I definitely want things to be good for everyone.” Emily says. “Will you be joining too?”

“Wait.” Lucifer’s eyes widen. “Are you inviting me over?”

Emily pauses for a moment. Realistically, it could cause an uproar. Although Sera hasn’t spoken much about him, she knows that he’s dangerous to the balance of Heaven.

Except…

Lucifer looks at her with a nervous smile on his face, and she can’t help but smile back. There’s something honest about his demeanour, like he wouldn’t hurt intentionally.

“Of course, your majesty. You’re the King of Hell, right? It only makes sense for you to come as well. I’ll send you a portal soon!”

Emily waves good-bye, and she turns the hologram off.

That was… easier than he expected.

She sure is nice. Good thing Emma was the one who picked up the call, Lucifer thinks. He had prepared a speech full of points and counterpoints for Sera, who was more of a stickler for protocol.

He’s about to get up and leave when the sun starts to dip in the horizon.

The light hits the purple stained glass windows, bathing everything in lavender hues, and Lucifer looks around in wonder. It had been a long time since he stepped foot into a building made by Heaven. The architecture reminds him so much of his old place - back when he still lived up there, instead of down here.

Lucifer spreads open his wings to fly around, checking out the details of the building: the white walls, the golden pillars, the angelic motifs. And although he's already come to terms with his exile, deep down, Heaven will always have a piece of his heart.

He lands back onto the ground, fluttering his wings distractedly.

"It's too quiet in here." His voice reverberates in the empty building. "Music! Right. Let's get some music."

Lucifer's first instinct is to bring out the fiddle, his usual instrument of choice, but he feels nostalgic as he looks around the building.

The angels used to play *one* specific instrument in particular. Something large, and gold, and heavenly…

and finally, after forever and a day,

Lucifer conjures up a harp.

It's huge - almost twice his height - and he sits down on a golden music bench. The sight of the harp feels both familiar and foreign, like bumping into an old friend he lost contact with.

"Let's see if I can still do this." He relaxes his shoulders, places his hands on the strings, and strums in one dramatic sweep,

pling!

The sound echoes, airy and light.

"Heaven, huh." Lucifer plucks the strings delicately, and he starts to perform a song he used to enjoy. "Not sure how that's gonna go."

It's a bit worrisome, if he's being honest. But he wants to bring Niffty back - and he also wants to be there for…

There's a rustling sound within the embassy, and he tenses up, his hands still playing carefully on the harp.

But then he spies something familiar from behind the wall:

The twitching of deer ears.

Alastor didn't expect to see this.

He had teleported into the Heaven Embassy to frighten Lucifer, to catch him with his defences down, but.

He's playing a gleaming harp that is much, *much* too big for him, and it should be a comical sight, yet it's not. His six wings are spread out in all its glory, a stark red against the gold and white of the Heaven Embassy, and he's illuminated from the warm sunshine.

He looks otherworldly, almost.

Saintly.

Untouchable.

And it makes sense that he used to be an angel.

Alastor peeks out again from behind the wall, but Lucifer's already looking at him, an amused grin on his face.

"I can see you, you know." Lucifer sounds ridiculously smug. "If you're thinking of scaring me, you failed today. HAH!"

"Well! How reassuring that your vision is intact, despite your age."

"Says the one with a monocle."

"This is merely a stylistic choice." Alastor makes his way over, his steps echoing in the embassy. "Once again, you are demonstrating your lack of knowledge about what is *en vogue.* How embarrassing for you!"

"I don't know how you keep that thing on." Lucifer deadpans. "What's it even connected to?"

"Some mysteries shall remain mysteries."

Alastor stands beside him, and Lucifer is still deftly strumming the harp, the elegant melody whispering through the air. When he looks down at him, it's hard to see what his expression is underneath that ridiculously oversized hat.

It annoys Alastor ~~a little.~~

A lot.

It annoys him a lot.

So much so that he grabs onto the brim, and throws Lucifer's hat onto an adjacent table.

"What the - MY HAT!" Lucifer shouts. Alastor can finally see his face now, which looks bewildered. "What was *that* for?!"

Alastor doesn't have a plausible excuse, so he settles on the truth. "It was offending my eyes!"

"That's not a good reason, jackass." Lucifer mutters. "Any *other* reason why you're here? Besides to come and mock me."

"I came by to check on your progress with Heaven. You should rejoice! Not everyone gets a personal visit from me."

"Uh, why are you acting like you're my boss?" Lucifer complains. Alastor places a hand on the shoulder of the harp, which makes Lucifer turn his head to look up at him.

"Unfortunately, someone has to stay on top of you."

"And, what? It has to be you?"

"Oh, Lucifer." Alastor lowers his voice, rough and quiet. "You *want* it to be me."

Lucifer plucks a wrong note, and it sounds harsh in the quietude of the embassy.

"Otherwise, you'll never get anything done!" Alastor continues cheerfully. "You'll be much more efficient under my supervision."

"You…" Lucifer takes in a deep breath. "Why do you say things like that?"

"Whatever do you mean?"

Alastor is genuinely puzzled, and Lucifer looks rather exasperated.

"Never mind." He grumbles. Alastor drums his fingers on the harp, waiting for him to speak, but Lucifer elects to play the song instead. His dark grey fingers skillfully pluck away at the strings, and he makes it look effortless.

"So?" Alastor presses on. "Are we to go up to Heaven, then?"

"Oh, that. Right." Lucifer still seems a bit irritated. "I spoke with a different Seraphim - Emma, I think. And she okayed the meeting. So, we're good."

"And?" Alastor prompts.

"What?"

He waits, but Lucifer doesn't say the most important part of their request.

"And *you?"*

"Huh?"

"Will-you-be-coming-up?" Alastor gnashes it out of his teeth, irked that he has to spell it out.

"OH!" Lucifer finally understands. "Yep, I'll be there too. Told you I'd do it. Take THAT!"

"Hmm. I had my doubts, but it appears you've performed adequately."

Alastor doesn't have a reason to stay, now that Lucifer's answered all of his questions. He considers teleporting back, to disappear into shadow, but he finds that he… doesn't want to leave.

Not by himself.

"Huh." Lucifer looks up at him. "Did you have something else to ask?"

"Somewhat." Alastor concedes. He gestures over at the harp, and in the corner of his mind, he notes that it matches the colour of Lucifer's eyes. "I have never seen you play this before."

"What, this ol' thing?" Lucifer strums away, the music drifting out in honeyed harmony. "I played it a loooot in Heaven. I try not to now, because of. Obvious reasons. Good memories, bad memories, yadda-yadda-yadda. But it's pretty, huh?"

"Pretty?"

Alastor can't help but glance over at Lucifer instead of the harp. He observes his red and white wings; his adept fingers playing the strings; his pink cheeks, rosy under the light. Alastor's stomach knots up for some reason, and he finds that he has to look away.

"Yes."

His voice sounds a bit strange, even to himself.

A little stifled.

A little soft.

It makes Lucifer stop playing, and he looks at Alastor with some curiosity.

"Hey. Wanna… give it a hand?" Lucifer asks. Alastor looks at the instrument, sparkling under the light. He must confess that he has *some* interest in learning, which Lucifer seems to have picked up.

"Oh? Won't the angels smite me the moment I play this?"

“No, but *I’ll* smite you if you don’t play.” Lucifer’s grinning good-naturedly, clearly joking. Before Alastor can even respond, he stands up and offers his music bench to him. “C’mon, it’ll be fun!”

Alastor squints at him, but he does sit down. “I’m not sure how fun this will be, with you teaching me.”

“God, just shut up and listen to me.”

“You are already proving my point!”

Lucifer huffs and moves to stand behind him. He reaches his hands over to Alastor - until he seems to rethink his decision. “Uh, I’ll just position your hands first. Can - may I? I gotta - hold them.”

Alastor turns around to make fun of him, but it’s with some surprise that he realizes he has to look up to see his face. With Alastor sitting on the music bench, Lucifer’s almost a head taller than him, and it’s a foreign feeling to tilt his head back.

Still, at this angle, he can see the way his long eyelashes fan out around his eyes, and he finds himself extending his hand out, approaching Lucifer's face closer, and closer, and closer, and…

Alastor’s fingertips brush against his cheek.

“What…” Lucifer’s words fade away, his eyes wide, but he doesn’t recoil from his touch.

And when he doesn’t speak any further, Alastor presses his palm completely against his skin, cupping his cheek softly with one hand. It’s extraordinary how small his face is compared to the size of Alastor's hand. He’s smooth to the touch, warm like a gentle fire.

And Alastor -

pulls his cheek as hard as he can.

“Ow ow ow ow OW!” Lucifer yelps and smacks his hand off. “What the fuck was *that* for?”

“What is the use in hesitating now? You were so bold last night.” Alastor teases, and Lucifer’s face practically turns tomato red.

“If you’re gonna bring that up, you were a *thousand* times worse!” Lucifer yells, and Alastor feels pinpricks of mortification, because it’s undoubtedly true. He had gone a little… further than he expected.

“Really now?” Alastor forces the words out. “Ha-ha-HA! You didn’t seem like you were complaining.”

“Ha-ha-HA! You enjoyed it as much as I did.” Lucifer retorts, and before Alastor can fully process what he means, he gets -

preoccupied by other thoughts, because Lucifer leans down, and his body presses against Alastor's back.

He stiffens up for a moment, and he can feel the soothing rise and fall of Lucifer's chest when he breathes. Lucifer grabs onto the back of his hands, *both hands,* and he guides him to the right position on the strings.

"Alright, here's how you play the harp." Lucifer's lips are right beside Alastor's ear, and it sends a shiver down his spine. "See, place your fingers in the middle of the strings. Keep your wrists straight."

Lucifer lets go of his hands to slide his fingers upwards, brushing up from his wrist…

to his arm…

his every move light, and careful. He's only touching him over his jacket, but Alastor can still feel his heat seep through the material, hot and sizzling in an unfamiliar manner.

"Put your elbows like this." Lucifer stops to adjust them, his fingers digging in pleasantly. Once he's satisfied that they're in the right spot, his hands drift

up-and-up-and-up,

settling onto Alastor's shoulders. He glances at Lucifer's small hands - remembers how they had intertwined their fingers last night -

"Can you relax your shoulders?" Lucifer asks. "You're crazy tense up here."

When he's done adjusting Alastor's posture, Lucifer's hands slip off, and he takes a step back. Although the whole thing couldn't have lasted more than a few seconds, he feels much colder without Lucifer's body enfolding his back.

Alastor plucks the string, a solitary note that reverberates in the empty gold building.

"Just like that." Lucifer says quietly.

He continues to teach him some chords, adjusting his hands every now and then. It's not the easiest task in the world, but after a while, Alastor is able to string together a refrain.

"Ugh. Of course you'd pick that up fast." Lucifer sounds almost envious. "Probably 'cuz your fingers are long. You can reach all kinds of places, huh?"

Alastor stops strumming to look at his hands, which he's never paid much attention to before.

"Is that my compliment for today? I suppose, against yours," Alastor places his hand beside Lucifer's, "it looks much, much bigger."

They stare at their hands for a moment, dark grey beside red. He could probably fit Lucifer's entire hand in his palm. He lifts his head up to look at him - Lucifer is still standing, and the newfound height difference makes Alastor want to pull him down, back onto his lap-

He scrunches his eyebrows at the desire.

My lap? Alastor thinks. And then he can't help but think about last night, Lucifer's sheer proximity, the way his shirt dipped so that it revealed his collarbone, his hooded eyes -

but more importantly, the perplexing things that came out of his mouth.

And he wants to know; to understand what exactly is going through Lucifer's head. Alastor resumes playing the harp, the music gentle and hesitant, and he fumbles a bit through the notes.

"We never finished our conversation."

Lucifer tilts his head. "What conversation?"

"When you said…" Alastor keeps his eyes on the harp, "that you… think of me. That you want to see me."

Lucifer is deathly quiet for a second.

"Did you mean it?" Alastor asks, and Lucifer -

sighs.

"Of course I meant it, you idiot." Lucifer sounds exasperated. "What do I get out of lying about this? It's embarrassing as hell, alright?"

He knows that, of course. Knows that Lucifer wouldn't just make this up for no good reason. But Alastor still doesn't quite understand what compelled him to be friends with him in the first place. What made Lucifer like him in any way.

Alastor makes sure to keep his smile neutral when he asks his next question.

"Why?"

"Oh, you want reasons why *I think about you?* Narcissist." Lucifer huffs and starts listing things off with his fingers.

"Let's see here. You piss me off. You always argue with me. You pick fights whenever you can."

None of this is news to Alastor, and he feels his eye twitch.

"How very flattering." He says flatly. "I am excited to hear how the rest of that sentence goes."

"Even so." Lucifer ignores him, continuing on. "Being with you…"

Alastor turns around fully, watching as emotions flit by Lucifer's face in a breakneck pace - discomfort, doubt, determination. Lucifer finally opens his mouth, and he says:

“It feels good.”

He runs his fingers through his blonde hair.

“It feels right.”

Lucifer stares right at him, his golden eyes piercing deep into his soul.

“So what about you?”

Alastor is knocked askew by his sincerity - unbalanced by his resolve - and what makes it even worse is how Lucifer is still lit up by the warm sunlight from the stained glass, glowing and radiant, as though his entire being was enveloped in a halo.

“Oh, you.” Alastor says quietly.

He plucks a string, and the note rings out, clear as day.

“Don’t you already know the answer?”

Lucifer looks surprised, at first -

and then he breaks into an absolutely brilliant smile, beaming at him with the force of a thousand suns. It’s almost too much to look at under the light, and Alastor quickly turns away. Changes the topic, before he does something outrageous.

“Why don’t you play a song now.” Alastor motions towards the harp. “The one you played earlier.”

“Oh! That one?” Lucifer sounds chipper, as though a weight was lifted off his shoulders. “Did you like it?”

“It may not be jazz, but I will confess that it is enjoyable enough.” Alastor relents.

“Wow. Today’s compliment, huh?” Lucifer plops down on the music bench without hesitation, and he’s… sitting beside Alastor.

Right beside him, actually.

It’s a tight fit. The bench is rather small, and it makes their legs completely press up against each other, thighs and calves and knees and ankles. It’s the first time they’ve sat together without any sort of distance between them, but Alastor doesn’t jerk away.

And neither does Lucifer.

He leans forward to play the song, the silvery notes beautiful in the air. Lucifer’s large wings flap absentmindedly behind him, and one of them cradles Alastor seemingly unconsciously.

It feels almost protective, but Alastor finds that he doesn’t mind it.

Sera is absolutely flabbergasted.

“EMILY. You have *no* idea what kind of repercussions this could have.”

“Oh, come on, Sera! It’s just a few people.” Emily says. “And it's best if we keep Lucifer happy, right?”

“A *few* people?”

Emily winces at this. “Oh, ha-ha. Did I forget to mention that?”

Sera lets out a deep sigh. “First Lute, now you. Fine. Since you've already planned this, I will be with you at all times. And we’ll make sure to have angels watching their every move.”

“Sure, sure.” Emily says sheepishly.

And then she reels back. “Hold on a second - what did you say about Lute?”

“She went down to Hell to look for Adam.” Sera frowns. “But she’s been acting erratically ever since.”

Emily ponders over this.

And the wheels start to rotate in her head.

Chapter End Notes

Fun Facts:
- They first bonded over music (ch. 2) so I wanted to bring that back here with the harp.
- They’ve been teaching each other during the fic: Alastor -> Lucifer the Charleston

dance (ch. 10), Lucifer -> Alastor polka dancing (ch. 14), and now Lucifer teaches him how to play the harp!
- Lucifer plays a wrong note this time, parallels with Alastor (ch. 10).
- Lucifer lists out the reasons, parallels with Alastor (ch. 14).
- This is the 2nd time Alastor broke a glass (ch. 8)
- The harp music reflects their emotions!

Please leave your theories/suggestions in the comments <3 I've wanted to write the next chapter for SO LONG you have no idea, it's gonna be H-O-T (non-explicit though, lol). Okay see you next Friday!

The Proposition

Chapter Notes

CH. 18 FANART:
- drawn by @AlfenMeri: 1 + 2
- comic by @dnana_art:1 + 2
- drawn by @urdashissh_
- drawn by @fullychaotichell
- drawn by @dirtgrubber: 1 + 2
- drawn by @of-spaceships-and-cats
- drawn by @starkspi
- drawn by @twosoulss77
- drawn by @scarletpineapple
- drawn by @grijannax
- drawn by @lol-draws
- drawn by @hawks-stan
- drawn by @entirelygutted
- drawn by @poing-boing
- drawn by @otsmosis
- drawn by: @kai_loves_coffe
- drawn by: @radiomoff
- drawn by @clearpoolart
- drawn by: @hocooart

And I LOVE the harp drawings I am so sorry for picking such a difficult instrument BUT I ADORE YOUR ART AHH!! Send me anything via Tumblr: @morningstarwrites + Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Aw.” Niffty kicks at a rock in annoyance. “There are no bugs here.”

She’s still roaming around Cherub Towne, which is weirdly fluffy and pastel-coloured and *why is everyone smiling at me when I walk down the street?*

“What a lovely dress!” Someone calls out to her. “I haven't seen anyone wear such a dark colour here.”

Niffty looks down at her outfit - the red dress from casino night - and it contrasts greatly with the light colour palette of Heaven. She ignores them and skitters away, because who *does* that? Who just walks up to a stranger and compliments them?

“Okay!” Niffty declares. “I need new clothes!”

She doesn't have any currency from Heaven, so she does the next best thing.

She tosses a rock into a cherub's house -

SMASH!

and the window breaks into a thousand pieces.

"GIVE ME YOUR CLOTHES!" She yells. No one responds, so she crawls in and starts rifling through an unoccupied bedroom. She pulls on different dresses, and after trying on (way) too many for (way) too long, she finally settles on a light blue dress.

"Yay, camouflage!" Niffty says, twirling around appreciatively.

But then she pouts when she looks at her back.

"Where can I get wings?" She mutters. "Everyone here has wings."

"Who are you?"

Niffty turns around at the sound of his voice, and she sees a little cherub, looking thoroughly confused. He must have come in while she was picking out an outfit, and he flies over. "And why are you wearing my daughter's clothes?"

"Hi! I'm your new housemaid." Niffty lies smoothly. "I was washing laundry and wanted to make sure they were nice and clean."

"Oh." For some reason, he accepts her excuse. "Thank you!"

Looks like people in Heaven are naturally more trusting, she thinks.

"Where are your wings?" He asks. He seems puzzled as he examines her back, and Niffty tries her best to look sad.

"They were torn off!"

"Well, that's not right." He looks genuinely concerned, and he waves a hand, making a set of white angel wings appear on her back. "Here! It's just a hologram, but I hope it brings you some comfort. Take it as thanks for cleaning up the house."

"Ooh!" Niffty shrieks. She looks at the mirror and admires her new wings, however temporary. "It's fantastic! I LOVE IT."

"You're welcome! If you need anything else, let me know. I'll just be downstairs."

Niffty has already escaped from the house when she hears him yell:

"WAIT - WHAT HAPPENED TO MY WINDOW?"

The day has finally come, and the four of them make their way through the golden portal. Sera and Emily are waiting for them by Heaven's gate, which *should* be a divine sight, but it looks overwhelmingly threatening instead.

"Dad, you okay?" Charlie looks worried, and Lucifer just offers her a weak thumbs up.

"YUP! Never better."

He half-expects Sera to attack him the second she sees him, but Emily spots them first, and she flies over to greet them.

"Charlie!"

"Emily!" They both give each other a tight hug - Vaggie watching over their interaction with irritation - and Charlie beams at her. "Oh my god, it is so good to see you!"

"You too! And - oh, you must be Lucifer!" Emily lets go of Charlie, and she looks at him curiously. "Wow! I've always heard that you were 'perfect in beauty.' I guess the tales are true."

He feels Alastor glimpse over at him when she says it, but he's too caught off-guard to return his look. Lucifer furrows his eyebrows, confused by the praise.

Is she being sarcastic? Lucifer thinks. *Some weird way to make fun of the fallen angel?*

But Emily just smiles at him, radiant and sincere. There doesn't seem to be any hidden intentions behind her words, and so he decides to take her at face value.

"Well, thank you, Emilia."

"Dad, it's Emily."

"EMILY! Right, right. Sorry." He hastily corrects himself, but Emily waves a hand.

"It's alright! Anything works for me."

"Lucifer." Sera floats over, and behind her serene demeanour, there's sympathy in her eyes. "How are you."

“Who, me? Oh, everything’s GREAT!” Lucifer says with far too much enthusiasm. It’s still uncomfortable meeting Sera, even after all this time. “Let’s, uhhhh, get in there.”

“Right.” Sera’s eyes land on each of them - Charlie, Vaggie, Lucifer - before settling her gaze onto Alastor. “And who is this?”

“Alastor.” Alastor bows theatrically. “Pleasure to be meeting you, such a pleasure!”

“Oh! The pleasure is all mine.” Emily bows back. Sera, however, looks less than thrilled by his antics.

“A… sinner?” Sera says suspiciously.

“The sinner, to be more precise.” Alastor says cheerfully. “I am the delegate for Hell’s citizens, and I will provide feedback on their behalf! You would like to keep those denizens happy, *don’t you?”*

His voice is sharp, dripping with hostile implication, and Sera looks displeased by his thinly-concealed threat.

“What Alastor is *trying* to say,” Charlie steps in front of him, “is that we would all love to work together and think about what we can do! Right?”

Alastor twirls his radio cane. “Whatever you say, my dear.”

Charlie’s attempt to assuage the tension falls flat. Sera and Alastor glare at each other, but she eventually gestures to the entrance.

“Shall we head to the meeting? We can go in through the promenade again.”

“Right.” Charlie laughs awkwardly. “So, um, it’ll just be me and Vaggie for now. I was hoping that you can provide Alastor with a tour, since it’s his first time here?”

“Oh, what a great idea!” Emily claps her hands together. “Of course you can have a tour.”

Sera’s disagreement is apparent on her face, but she refrains from voicing it. “And you, Lucifer? Will you be joining us?”

“Oh! Y’know, Charlie’s better at all this diplomatic stuff. As for me…” Lucifer quickly comes up with an excuse.

A shitty excuse, but an *excuse,* nonetheless.

“Do you still have that ice cream parlour?”

“Ice… cream?” Sera echoes.

“Yeah.” Lucifer rolls with it. “It’s been a while since I had it!”

“We do!” Emily says cheerily. “Why don’t you two go and have some, then? I’ll come pick you up afterwards.”

Sera looks like she just sucked a lemon. Her eyes flit between them, as though trying to figure out who is the bigger problem. “Allow me to assign some angels for you. Treat them as a tour guide, if you will.”

She claps her hands, and two large angels come down, flanking Lucifer and Alastor on either side. They’re both so big and burly that they tower over them - even Alastor has to crane his neck to look up.

“Hmm.” Alastor smiles with displeasure. “Let us get on with it.”

Everyone is looking at them.

Or at least, it certainly *feels* that way. Some of the blame must fall on Sera - Lucifer has no doubt that she informed them to observe their every action - and their gazes are both scrutinizing and… curious. Like they’re sizing him up, trying to figure out who he is, because not everyone knows what he looks like.

What *Lucifer* looks like.

He digs his nails into his palms, trying to focus.

Okay. Gotta figure out how to sneak away from these angels, Lucifer thinks.

It’s hard to slip out, but they need some time to themselves so that they can actually look for Niffty. And he can’t brainstorm with Alastor either, not with the angels watching. So Lucifer tries out his first method:

Scouting from above.

He bolts up into the sky, flapping his wings as hard as he can, but an angel follows after him with shocking speed. They both pause in the clouds to look at each other, and the angel seems unamused.

“Is something wrong, your majesty?”

“Nope! I just wanted to look at the scenery.” Lucifer grins. He surreptitiously scans the landscape below for Niffty, but he can’t seem to find her.

They eventually fly back down, and Lucifer lands beside Alastor. When he looks over at him, Lucifer shakes his head slightly to indicate that he didn’t find her.

“Let’s head on to get ice cream without any more sudden movements.” The angel says.

They reorganize so that one angel is walking in front of them, the other at the back, and it makes Lucifer feel vaguely like he’s being babysat. He tries to look around the angel, but his giant wings - majestic and pure white in colour - block his view.

Still, he gets absorbed in watching how he moves his wings, the soft white feathers so similar yet so different from his own. Lucifer looks back at his wings, red and white in hue, flicking them in the air.

He used to hate the sight of them, back when they first turned scarlet, but now…

a red feather

flies

down

and

Alastor catches it.

He lifts the feather up against the sky, and the sunbeams filter through, lighting it into an incandescent pink.

“Lucifer.” Alastor sounds strangely serious.

“Uh huh?” Lucifer tries to keep his voice down, even though he knows that their supposed tour guides (re: angels) are hanging on to their every word.

“Are you still bothered by your wings?”

Lucifer snaps his head towards him, surprised at the question. But Alastor is looking at the feather, holding it carefully in his fingers.

“You remembered?” There’s a warmth in his chest, dancing like a flickering candle, and Lucifer can’t help but feel… well.

He’s rather touched.

He flutters his six wings, stirring up a slight breeze that feels cool and refreshing.

“I mean, uh. You told me not to worry about them.” Lucifer admits. “So - nah. I’m fine.”

“Good.” He says shortly.

Lucifer looks away, so he doesn't notice Alastor tucking the feather into his pocket.

When they reach the ice cream parlour, Lucifer looks genuinely excited.

"Holy shit!" He says, practically bouncing on his heels. "It's been ages since I had this."

"What is the big deal?" Alastor stares at the shop with some distaste. "Don't we *also* have ice cream in Hell?"

Lucifer turns to him, his eyes sparkling. "The ice cream here is out of this world - they've really perfected it. And hooooh, the sprinkles!"

The angels actually crack a smile at this, and they seem quite pleased at his reaction. "Please feel free to have some."

"Well, don't mind if I do!"

Lucifer gets handed a cone, and -

he licks up the ice cream, his forked tongue lapping it up. Eagerly. Enthusiastically. Like he can't get enough of it. Alastor watches the motion with rapt attention, until Angel Dust's words flicker through his mind -

"Don't you know what they say about people who can tie knots in cherry stems? They're good with their mouth."

Alastor feels that strange contortion in his stomach again, and he hastily looks away.

"Want one?" The angel asks Alastor, who shakes his head.

"Oh, I would prefer not to. I detest sweet things!"

"Well, you're in luck. The flavours change depending on what you like. Doesn't have to be sweet."

"Is that so? How very intriguing." This does pique Alastor's interest, and he looks over at Lucifer…

…who looks back.

“Wait a…” Lucifer says slowly, watching as Alastor’s hand comes closer and closer to his ice cream cone. “Don’t you fucking *dare - ”*

Alastor dips a finger into his ice cream, and Lucifer yelps at this.

“HEY! Couldn’t you just get your own?!”

“Well, let’s see if this angel is telling the truth, shall we?” Alastor says brightly. He puts his finger in his mouth, dragging his tongue up, and it somehow silences Lucifer’s protests.

“Ooh, tasty!” Alastor is genuinely surprised. “I suppose I’ll have a scoop, then.”

His words bring Lucifer back to life, and he scowls - grabs his hand forcefully - Alastor shies away at the contact, at the feeling of Lucifer’s delicate fingers prying his hands open -

but then he presses his ice cream cone into Alastor’s palm.

“Just - take this one.” Lucifer says, exasperated. “I’ll get another.”

Alastor looks down at the cone, at the way Lucifer’s hands are still covering his, and he pushes the ice cream back.

“Oh, I am not interested in your leftovers.”

Lucifer shoves it towards him -

“You’re the one who put your hands in it!”

Alastor thrusts it back -

“You have already eaten most of this. Why, it’s practically trash at this point!”

“It’s still edible, jackass!”

“Is that so? Why don’t you prove that by finishing it?”

“Gentlemen, please!” The angel says frantically, unused to the way they bicker. “You can each get new ones! Alright?”

They glare at each other before turning away, dropping the ice cream on the ground in the process.

“Fine.”

“I suppose that is agreeable.”

True to their word, the angels provide new ice cream cones for them, and they continue their tour through the town. They point and actually start to explain what some of the stores are, gesturing at the petting zoo, the hotel, the courthouse.

Although.

Alastor is otherwise preoccupied. He keeps an eye out for Niffty, trying to see if there's a red streak dashing around in the background. It would be a lot easier if he could teleport, to pop in and out as he pleases.

Well. Let's see if my abilities work here, Alastor thinks. He finishes off the rest of his ice cream and starts to morph into shadow, but before he can leave, one of the angels grabs his wrist.

"Where are you headed to?" The angel asks suspiciously.

Alastor looks down at where their hands meet, and he feels a flurry of repulsion at the contact.

The hair on his skin starts to stand up - body swirling with a rapid spiral of disgust-anger-nausea and he's about to bite down and rip his hand right off of his arm let go let go let go let go let go let go let go let go let go let go *let go of me* -

SMACK!

Lucifer slaps the angel's hand off.

"What the - " The angel looks astounded. And Lucifer does too, even though he's the one who did the action. As though he were acting without thinking.

"He - just wanted to, uh… use. The. Washroom?" Lucifer ends the sentence unconvincingly. Alastor squints at him, annoyed that this was the graceless excuse Lucifer came up with.

"Yes. The washroom." Alastor concedes. "Where is it?"

"Oh! In Heaven, people don't have the urge to do that anymore." The other angel replies. "Unlike in Hell. That should affect you too, while you're here."

"How very convenient."

Alastor doesn't mean it at all. He's annoyed. Immensely.

But he does feel marginally better, now that Lucifer removed the angel's hand from him.

Charlie
> looking for her now! going to meeting so can't reply

Angel Dust
> nice

"Hey, they're doin' the plan!" Angel Dust shows his phone to share Charlie's text. Rosie nods - he had invited her back to the hotel, since no one else was there. "You think we'll get Niffty back soon?"

"I gotta hand it to them, they work fast." Husk says. "They're probably the best people to send up. All we can do now is wait."

They sit together in silence for a bit, and then Angel Dust stands up.

"Well! In that case - "

Angel Dust slaps the cork board, which is practically overflowing with evidence -

"- let's kick off our official first meeting of this investigation team."

"How long have you been doing this, sweetie?" Rosie asks.

"Oh, I've had my suspicions since we all went clubbing." Angel Dust points at the signed picture of Alastor and Lucifer at the Consent club. "But I really started this when we were plannin' for the masquerade. So, uh. Woah. This took a few *months* of my life? Jeez."

He looks a bit sick at the thought, but then he moves on. "Whatever. Okay. A lotta curveballs happened in this time. I thought they were hookin' up at first, but that wasn't it. And then Charlie told me they became friends, but that's not really the right word here either."

"Well, well. I've been thinking about this since they performed at Mimzy's club." Rosie says thoughtfully. "Alastor's always been a tough one to decipher, but you know, I have never seen him act this way."

"Like how?"

"Like…" Rosie makes a heart shape with her hands. "A smitten kitten."

Angel Dust and Husk both recoil at this.

"Rosie, you make that scumbag sound way too adorable." Angel Dust scoffs. "But… yeah, I guess. He and Lucifer do spend a lotta time together."

"I also noticed something that you would find very interesting!" Rosie walks up, and pins her own note up on the board. They crowd around to read her refined calligraphy:

Lucifer gets jealous when I hold on to Alastor.

“May I suggest a two-pronged approach?” Rosie smiles cheerily. “Angel, dearie, I know we mentioned that you should flirt with him, but why don’t we *both* hang around Alastor when he’s back? That may motivate his royal majesty to be a bit more… forward.”

“Oh yeah. You and me, Rosie.”

Angel Dust grins at her -

Rosie giggles at him -

and Husk slaps his hands over his face.

“You fuckers are terrible for each other.”

“Aw, Husk, c’mon!” Angel Dust protests. “If you’re gonna be an asshole about it, at least help us come up with a team name.”

Angel Dust writes down the initials of all their names on scraps of paper.

“H for Husk… R for Rosie… A and D for my name…”

He rearranges the letters to make it spell

H-A-R-D.

“We are *not* going to name ourselves something that stupid!” Husk roars, slapping the paper. It scatters in the air, and Angel Dust cackles so hard he has to clutch his sides.

“What gives? I thought you didn’t care about any of this!”

“If I have to be a part of this stupid shit, I want a better team name.”

“What would rhyme with ‘hard’?" Rosie ponders for a moment. “The Hard… Sweethearts?”

“Rosie, stop encouraging him.”

“The Sweethearts with a *Hard-On.”* Angel Dust amends.

“That’s ENOUGH!”

No matter how much they slip and dodge, the angels appear behind Lucifer and Alastor - always watching, always checking. Throughout the whole journey, they each try different methods:

Alastor summons up his shadow beings, but they get pulverized by angelic weapons instantly.[1]

[1] (Lucifer feels a bit saddened at the sight.)

Lucifer shape shifts into a bird, and they slam a bird cage over him.[2]

[2] ("Please, no shapeshifting in Heaven." The angel scolds.)

Alastor tries to cause a distraction by fighting with him, and every single angel swoops in to pull them apart.[3]

[3] ("Why are you two fighting?" The angels ask. It's not a question that anyone has ever asked him before, and Lucifer finds it hard to answer.

"Ha. Ha. HA. Why don't you come up with your own theory?" Alastor had replied.)

It's getting a bit ridiculous, now. To the point where they're both exhausted, fed up, and not even the prospect of more ice cream can cheer Lucifer up. Alastor strikes his radio cane on the floor,

tap,

tap,

tap,

which makes the angels look over.

"Did you have a question?" One of them says.

"Could you give us a moment?" Alastor smiles at them pleasantly, looking like the picture of sophistication.

"For what?" The angel asks.

His smile starts to waver. "I would like to speak to him privately."

"Why?"

And now he looks like he's about two seconds away from blowing up.

"Do I need a reason," Alastor snarls, "to speak with *my KING?!"*

Lucifer chokes on air when he hears that.

Because.

Alastor has called him by many awful and sarcastic little titles. *Your majesty. Sir. Your royal highness.* But he has never once called him *my king.* And although Lucifer knows he's only using it to pull rank, to put the angels in their place, it feels… different. He can't nail down why, though.

The angels look at each other unsurely. "Fine. You have one minute."

They give them a wide berth, still close enough to watch them, but not breathing down on their necks like before. When Alastor is certain that they've moved a sufficient distance, he hurriedly speaks into his ear.

"Well now. Did you have a cerebral plan to shake them off?" Alastor whispers. "This is your domain, is it not?"

"I haven't been here in ages!" Lucifer whispers back. "Did *you* have something?"

"Am I supposed to do all the heavy lifting here?"

"Some lifting would be helpful, douchebag!"

"Unfortunately, my plans have been foiled so far. Why don't you use that little brain of yours to think of something?"

"Uh, I'm trying, bitch! Did you forget that they literally put me in a bird cage?!"

"You two okay over there?" The angel calls out.

"Oh, everything is quite alright. We just need a little more time!" Alastor calls out cheerily. The angel nods slowly, and he leans back down. "This may be our only opportunity to come up with something. I do not believe those divine beings will permit us to do this again."

Lucifer sighs and runs his hands through his hair. "Okay, okay. So far, we've found out… no fighting, no washrooms, no flying, no teleporting, no shapeshifting, no shadow creatures, so. Shit. What can we even do?"

Alastor thinks for a moment. "If *we* are unable to leave, we will have to make *them* leave. Perhaps we can do something that makes it difficult for them to stay and watch."

"Oh!" Lucifer grins at this. "Wait, that'll work. Okay, what do you never want to see? It's gotta be something awkward. Something uncomfortable. Something…"

"Hmm." Alastor taps his chin in thought.

And it looks like he comes up with something, because he sucks in a sharp breath.

"Lay it on me." Lucifer murmurs, and Alastor's deer ears lie flat on his head.

"And what makes you think I have something to say?"

“It’s written all over your face!”

Alastor looks ticked off. “You have gotten *far* too perceptive for your own good.”

“Thanks, but this is not a great time for a compliment exchange.” Lucifer says sarcastically. Alastor’s eye twitches, and he says the next part with great difficulty.

“If it is something that I do not wish to see, it is an act of… the indecent nature.”

They look at each other, and the insinuation makes Lucifer’s thoughts roll by so violently they crash against each other like a plunging wave.

“Indecent?” He can’t quite believe his ears. “What kind of… are you saying we should hook up?”

“I am not *suggesting* anything.” Alastor growls. Takes in a deep breath. He looks down at Lucifer coolly, his face purposefully inexpressive. “You asked what I would find intolerable. So I answered.”

“Right.” Lucifer thinks for a second. “Actually - that gives me an idea, but you’re not gonna like it.”

“It’s best if you don’t finish that sentence if you would like to live.” Alastor sounds a little faint, but Lucifer continues on anyway.

“Everyone in Heaven is a massive prude. They’d hate to see any sort of public, uh, ‘indecency,’ as you would say. If we pretend to - ”

“Did you not hear me the first time?” Alastor cuts in harshly, his smile cruel and taut. “Or are you *trying* to anger me?”

Alastor’s shadow leaps up from his back, and he hasn’t looked this upset in a while - it’s a different kind of fury, heated and tense; it makes Alastor avoid eye contact; causes Lucifer to backtrack; and now his words fumble out in a hurried mess.

“We don’t - let’s not, then.” Lucifer quickly retracts. “Got anything else?”

“Are you two done now?” An angel calls out. Lucifer looks over, and it’s with a sinking feeling that he realizes their time is up, they haven’t come up with anything, and now Niffty is lost in Heaven forever.

He sighs, starts to head back -

until Alastor grabs onto his arm, his long fingers wrapping around him securely. Lucifer gazes at where they’re touching, and then drags his eyes back to his face.

“You - ” Alastor looks shaken for a second. It disappears immediately when he steels himself, and his expression returns to his usual smile.

But his voice is small when he says:

“You will have to lead.”

It startles him to hear that, because Alastor is not the type to give up control in any way. But Lucifer nods imperceptibly, and once he is certain that the angels are watching, he turns around to face him, flies up so that they’re almost at the same height -

and puts a finger under Alastor’s chin, making him freeze in place.

Lucifer looks at him from underneath his lashes, his lips twisting into a smirk.

“I want you.”

Alastor visibly flinches at this. *“What?”*

Lucifer yanks Alastor towards him, forcing him close so that they’re face-to-face.

“You have no idea…” Lucifer says roughly, “…the things that I’d do to you.”

Alastor swallows, doesn’t reply for a second, and Lucifer gets worried that maybe he’s pushing him too much, too fast - starts to let go of his shirt - almost moves back until -

Alastor leans in closer, his eyes half-lidded.

“Why don’t you then?”

His words hit him right in the chest; they’re still impossibly close, and whatever remaining intellectual thought left in Lucifer’s brain flies out his head and is replaced with just:

Woah. Hot.

Lucifer blinks at the thought. *What?*

He doesn’t dwell on it (time is of the essence, with the way the angels are staring at them warily) and Lucifer pushes him down, slow enough to give him a warning, but Alastor still sprawls over the floor in a red heap.

He hoists himself on top, straddles Alastor with his legs on either side of his waist, and Lucifer’s hands slide to cup his face; watches the way his eyes stare up at him in an almost shocked daze, his previous bravado gone; selfishly enjoying the fact that he made Alastor inarticulate;

and he leans down

and down and

down

to press his forehead against his, moving gently. Cautiously. Not wanting to freak him out too much.

He retracts his wings and adjusts his hands on Alastor's cheeks, angling them so that it covers both of their faces. It makes for the perfect hiding spot to brush his nose against his, the sensation equal parts ticklish and delightful. Their lips are centimetres apart, not touching, merely giving the illusion that they're kissing; a sleight of hand that harms no one.

Alastor squeezes his eyes shut,

(from nerves, maybe?)

and Lucifer is struck with the urge to soothe him, to reassure him, somehow, so he brushes Alastor's hair out of his eyes. The action makes him snap his eyes back open, pupils dilated, darting from left to right and...

he's definitely nervous.

"You good?" Lucifer mumbles. Alastor pulls his ears back at the question, but he smiles his habitual, self-assured grin.

"Oh, I can do this all day."

His voice is lowered. Hoarse. Radio filter completely off.

And as though wanting to prove himself, Alastor's hands latch on to his thighs... drifts upwards from Lucifer's legs to his back, vertebrae by vertebrae...

slowly, at first…

and then urgently - like he needs it - like he wants it - like he *has* to be close - the contact is so electric it jolts Lucifer from head to toe, makes him cave into the desire to loosen Alastor's bowtie, fingers yanking it off and watching it unfurl to reveal the elegant column of his throat.

"AGH!"

They both jerk at the sound, and Lucifer had completely forgotten that the angels were watching.

"Oh, sweet lord have mercy! I can't stand PDA!" One of them yells, covering their eyes.

"Um - you know what, we - once you're done, we'll resume the tour!" The other one stutters. "Just - uh - why don't you duck into an alleyway or something for now?!"

"You sure?" Lucifer calls out, heart in his throat.

"YES!" The angel shrieks. "To your left - GO THERE! No one will see you two!"

They can't seem to get away fast enough, and in a flash the angels have disappeared. Lucifer scans their surroundings, and he's pleased to note that the crowd of angelic citizens have all but dispersed as well.

It's just him and Alastor left in the promenade, and he sighs in relief.

"HAH! See? Told ya they're too goody-goody to watch." Lucifer looks down at Alastor, who is still pinned underneath him. He finally takes a note of his handiwork, and Alastor looks absolutely disheveled, his clothes ruffled, neck exposed, hair a mess, and…

his face, normally devoid of any incriminating emotion, is *completely* pink.

"Woah." Lucifer feels awestruck. "This is the first time I've ever seen you blush."

Alastor squints at him, but he's clearly flustered. "And what about it?"

"Cute." He mumbles unintentionally, and Alastor looks so affronted he shoves Lucifer off in one motion. "OW - HEY!"

"You are the *only* person who has ever called me that." Alastor sounds muffled. He has one hand covering his face to hide his flushed cheeks, and all Lucifer can see are his eyes, adamantly looking elsewhere.

"It's a nice thing, alright? A compliment!" Lucifer says hurriedly.

"I am aware of your intention." He snaps.

They both sit up on the ground, and Lucifer watches as Alastor drags his hands through his hair. His bowtie is still loosely hanging around his neck, his bare neck and collarbone peeking out.

"You are more…. confident… than I expected." Alastor glances over at him, a bit accusatory. His face is still pink, and it makes Lucifer want to touch his cheeks and see if it's as warm as it looks. "Have you been doing this with other people?"

It's strange for him to pose a question like that. Really, really strange. Lucifer raises an eyebrow, but answers anyway. "Uh. Not in a long time."

"How long?" Alastor persists.

"Huh? What kind of… I dunno. I don't really keep track of this stuff." He tries to recall the last time he did any sort of fooling around. His mind draws a blank, and he shakes his head. "Why are you even asking?"

"Why don't you take a guess? Can't show all my cards on the table, now, can I?" Alastor says cagily.

Lucifer notes, with some disappointment, that his blush is gone. In fact, he's annoyingly composed again, and Lucifer wants to rile him up make his blood boil *really* get under his skin -

so he goes for an absolutely ridiculous idea.

"Know what I think?" Lucifer lowers his voice, and Alastor has to lean in to hear him.

“Oh, I am just dying to find out.”

“I think you’re jealous, and *that’s* why you’re asking.”

“Did I hear you right? What is there to be jealous about?” Alastor looks annoyed, and it gives him a little thrill, a jolt of excitement that hums through his veins.

“You *liked* being under me.” Lucifer teases, completely unserious. “And now you’re allllllllllll bent out of shape because I might have done this with someone else.”

He expects Alastor to viciously attack him for talking shit, and he prepares himself for the fight they’ll get into, looks forward to it, actually, and he readies himself to throw a punch but

Alastor.

Says.

Nothing.

He does open his mouth, but no sound comes out, and it’s the second time he's rendered Alastor speechless in one day. Lucifer feels embarrassment crash into his head - has to tear his eyes away -

“HAH!” He forces out an unconvincing laugh, trying to ease the weird atmosphere he created. “LET’S - we gotta go! Who knows when those angels will come back, right?!”

“…right.” Alastor breaks his silence. There’s a strange emotion in his face, one that doesn’t reflect anger or repugnance; it’s mostly just shock, tinged with something else.

It's familiar, somehow. Lucifer remembers seeing it back at the masquerade ball.

He had that same expression when Lucifer put on the red overcoat.

Sera should be paying more attention to the meeting, but her mind is preoccupied, alternating between two names:

Lute

Lucifer

Lute

Lucifer

Lute

Lucifer…

The timing is far too suspicious, but she still doesn't have enough information to link them together yet. Sera sighs and watches over Emily, who is hanging on to every word that Charlie is saying.

"…I just think, if we work together, it'll be better for everyone!" Charlie finishes.

"A noble thought, Princess Morningstar." Sera smiles, not unkindly. As she thinks of a good way to shoot her down, the two angels - the ones she assigned to Alastor and Lucifer - burst through the door, frazzled and out of breath.

"Your… highness…" One of them wheezes. "We had to… come back."

Sera had specifically told them *not* to leave Alastor and Lucifer alone, so she's feeling rather troubled at their return.

"Did something happen?" Sera asks, and the angels look at each other. For some reason, they both start to turn red.

"Something.. well. They kinda needed privacy."

"Explain."

"I don't want to say in… polite company." One of the angels say awkwardly.

Sera raises an eyebrow at this. "If you are not willing to elaborate, then go back. They'll get *lost* if you're not there. Do you understand?"

"O… okay. They're probably done by now, right?" The angels whisper to each other.

"Leave." Sera says sharply.

"Y-yes, your highness!"

As they exit, she turns around -

and she's faced with the inquisitive stares of Emily, Vaggie and Charlie, the three of them doing a terrible job of pretending not to eavesdrop. When they get caught, they all pointedly look away.

"Shall we resume our meeting?" Sera smiles politely. "What other ideas do you have, Princess?"

Lute flies over the promenade, but she can't find that awful gremlin.

"Why did I do this." She grumbles and sits on top of a roof, pulling her knees to her chest. "This whole idea was stupid to begin with."

Adam's sneering face flickers by her mind, and she feels a sorrowful smile tug at her lips. "But I guess… he would have made fun of me for starting this whole shitshow."

She had started this plan in the hopes that it would bring her some comfort; a sense of order in the confusing aftermath of battle. But that Niffty girl had been unsettling - not exactly of sound mind - and now, Lute's not sure what her next move should be.

Unbeknownst to her, Niffty walks by on the street, camouflaged by her blue dress and little angel wings.

And in the distance,

Alastor and Lucifer make their way over.

Chapter End Notes

I went back and added a few Fun Facts to every chapter, if you wanna take a look! I didn't list them all, so see if you can find any more. Also It's officially been 3 months since I started writing this fic. What!! I love you all. Thank you always for being here.

(You: MAKE THEM KISS
Me: 😈)

Seriously though, TRUST ME IT'LL HAPPEN! And to address a FAQ: there is no top/bottom for this fic. I've always approached them as very, very equal.

Fun Facts:
- Chapter title is, you know. Lucifer fake (real?) hitting on Alastor, LOL
- Alastor complimenting Lucifer's wings is from (ch. 4 + 5)
- Parallels: this time Lucifer is on top of Alastor (ch. 16/17)
- Alastor refused to close his eyes in ch. 14 but he closes them now because he trusts Lucifer more!
- Ch. 10 is when Alastor has an unrecognizable emotion when he sees Lucifer for the first time wearing red
- The specific line about Lucifer being "perfect in beauty" is based off of an interpretation from the bible, Ezekiel 28:12.
- I'm also drawing from art historical contexts where he's been depicted as way, way too hot. (Check out the story about "Le génie du mal and L'ange du mal" if you want a good laugh!)

Also I had to cut this chapter in half because it was getting too long. I didn't quite get to the Good Stuff, so the Heat™ will continue next chapter, SEE YOU NEXT FRIDAY!

The Headache

Chapter Notes

CH. 19 FANART:
- 11 page comic by @alloplush
- and here: @alloplush
- animation by @Simphony_Da_Kat
- animatic by @rizuluv: 1 + 2 + YouTube
- drawn by @dirtgrubber: 1 + 2
- drawn by @fullychaotichell
- drawn by @sterlingfiction
- drawn by @thekrazykook
- drawn by @nerdynuala
- drawn by @grijannax
- drawn by @Zuungi
- drawn by @scarletpineapple
- drawn by @haydieks
- drawn by @of-spaceships-and-cats
- drawn by: @0-cloud-puff-0

This week's fanart made me blush SO HARD god I just love all the drawings of Lucifer straddling Alastor FIVE STARS FLAWLESS GREATER THAN GREAT! I literally love you. Send me any fanart via Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Hey! You there!"

Niffty turns around and sees an angel standing outside of a stylish café; it's situated beside an ice cream parlour, and the angel waves at her direction. She looks to her left and right, but there's no one else around besides her.

"Me?" Niffty points to herself.

"Yes, you in the lovely blue dress!" The angel says cheerfully. "I'm about to close for the day, but I still have some cake. Would you be interested in eating it? It's such a waste otherwise."

"Oh, cake? I want it!" Niffty nods heartily. She has a skip in her step as she slips into the cafe, and the angel puts down an assortment of desserts onto a plate.

“Okay, so there’s strawberry, tiramisu, chocolate…” She looks at Niffty. “Do you want some tea with it?”

“I *really* love tea!”

She slides into an empty table, kicking her legs happily as she waits for her food. The angel places a fancy tea set and a matching plate in front of her, overflowing with colourful slices of cake.

“Woah. This looks good!” Niffty’s mouth starts to water.

“Aw, thanks!” The angel beams. “Let me know which one’s your favourite - ”

“ALL OF THEM!” She says excitedly. She inhales the desserts at a record speed, and the angel watches over her with the tenderness of a doting mother.

Although, Niffty is so absorbed in eating that she doesn’t notice Alastor and Lucifer walking right past the shop.

Alastor is certain that he’s at death’s door.

(Again.)

Because if not…

what other *reason* is there…

for why his heart squeezes so much? why his stomach is all knotted up? why the mere sight of Lucifer’s teasing smirk rendered him speechless?

Alastor thinks about his dark grey fingers lifting his chin. The way his hands gently brushed his hair back. He lets out an irritated huff when he can’t get it out of his head, his mind pulsating uncomfortably, and Lucifer glances at him when he makes the noise.

“What’s up? Did you see her?”

“No.” Alastor replies tersely. He lapses back into silence, too busy introspecting to initiate a sparkling conversation.

He had been upset when Lucifer suggested play-acting intimacy -

Incorrect. ‘Upset’ wasn’t the right word. ‘Upset’ was too negative, too distressed, too unhappy.

It had been a strange strange mix of embarrassment and ~~excitement~~

~~excitement~~

~~excite -~~

Alastor snarls at his thought - can’t seem to replace the word with another one - and for the first time, he’s unable to lie to himself in his own mind.

So be it.

He’ll admit it.

It *was* exciting; electrifying; thrilling-stirring-rousing; it made his insides bubble up effervescently, but all those blissful feelings are shaken up with nausea, because how could any of this possibly be good?

Why you? Alastor thinks, trailing behind Lucifer. *What is it about you that is so different?*

He initially attributed Lucifer’s allure to his sheer power, which must play *some* part, but he also knows more about him now. Aware that he’s caring, honest to a fault, transparent with his emotions, and is that it? Simply because he harbours no ill will?

Alastor runs his hands through his hair, pulls his ears back, and determinedly ignores Lucifer’s bemused gaze.

No. That’s not quite right. Lucifer isn’t the first to extend a friendly hand. Alastor has spent many a day with the hodgepodge group from the Hazbin Hotel, and despite their laughable antics, he knows that they’re quite genuine.

Even so, Lucifer has his faults, but he can’t seem to care about them right now. Or rather, he ~~likes his faults~~

~~Likes his~~

~~Likes~~

Alastor lets out another irritated noise, which makes Lucifer look over.

“Hey, uh. You look kind of - ”

“Then stop looking at me.” Alastor snaps. “Problem solved!”

Lucifer glares at him, but he does turn away, all while muttering profanities under his breath. Alastor looks at the small of his back, and his words haunt his mind:

"You liked being under me. And now you're allllllllllll bent out of shape because I might have done this with someone else."

Alastor was flabbergasted when Lucifer had said it.

Because…

he was annoyingly on the mark.

There's a strange emotion gnawing away at him - a yearning - a desire that he didn't even know he was capable of - his hand itches to get closer, to grab ahold of Lucifer in some way, and -

Like the clouds departing after a rainfall, Alastor's mind becomes startlingly clear.

Angelic blood! He smiles triumphantly. *That must be it. I simply want to taste him. Once I find some way to drink his blood, this absurd longing will finally disappear.*

Alastor feels much better after this realization, and he takes a couple steps forward so that they walk side-by-side.

"We may require a better plan. This aimless stroll around Heaven is rather inefficient."

"Oh, you're talking to me now?" Lucifer says dryly. Alastor chooses to ignore his comment.

"Those angels could return at any moment. What do you have up your sleeve?"

"Uh, this is it." Lucifer gestures helplessly in the air. "Unless you can summon her or something, I have no idea what else we can do."

"Summon Niffty?" He twirls his radio cane in thought. "Now that we're in the same plane of being, I suppose I can give it a whirl."

Alastor snaps his fingers, but Niffty doesn't appear. Instead, there's a faint tugging sensation in his head, and he turns to face that direction.

"How very irritating. The atmosphere here seems to dampen my abilities! But I can somewhat locate her." Alastor points in front of him. "This way."

They meander through alleyways, shops, and buildings until…

they wind up back at the promenade. They're in front of the ice cream parlour, standing next to a modish café, and Lucifer looks around in befuddlement.

"What the hell? *Here?* Are you sure?"

Alastor narrows his eyes. "If you doubt me, why don't you lead the way, then?"

“I’m just saying, we were here like an hour ago. We would have seen her by now!”

“Well! You should know that people walk around, hmm? That’s how they get to different places.”

“Oh, I’m familiar with how *walking* works, asshole!”

“Are you now? You seem quite confused about the process, so allow me to demonstrate - she got on her legs,” Alastor mimes the movement with two of his fingers, “and made her way over here. Problem solved!”

Lucifer looks like he’s about to throttle him. “You tacky piece of - ”

“Hold that thought.”

Alastor lifts up a hand, and Lucifer really does cease talking. His deer ears twitch as he listens intently, and there’s the ominous sound of wings flapping from a distance. When he looks up at the sky, he finds that the two angels are making their way back to them.

“It appears our jail wardens have made a return.” Alastor mutters. Lucifer glances up, and he lets out an exasperated grumble.

“Shit. What now?”

“What else?” Alastor speaks calmly, even though he is anything but. “Shall we do your little idea again?”

“My idea, wha… the ‘public indecency’?” Lucifer does air quotes with his hands. “Seriously? You’re okay with doing that again?”

The idea of Lucifer putting his hands on him fuels the impatient fire burning inside of him, and - inexplicably,

(mortifyingly,)

he finds himself looking forward to it. So much so that Alastor offers a hand out, palm-up, and Lucifer stares at his outstretched fingers.

“Do with me what you will.”

Alastor’s words seem to rouse him into action, and Lucifer nods, taking his hand firmly to pull him in closer. He intertwines their fingers for a brief moment - long enough that it makes Alastor’s brain blow a fuse - and then Lucifer lights up, as though he had an idea.

“Mhm, this’ll be fun.” He smiles at him mischievously, and Alastor can’t help but look at him with suspicion.

“What constitutes as ‘fun’ for you?”

“Just follow my lead, geez.”

They hear the footsteps of the angels. “So, uh, did you get that out of your system? We should probably - ”

In one fluid motion, Lucifer dips Alastor,

like they’re dancing,

Lucifer’s right hand still holding his, his left arm supporting Alastor's back. His forearms are surprisingly strong, snugly wrapping around Alastor to press him up against his chest.

It should be uncomfortable due to the height difference, but Lucifer is so powerful that he carries him effortlessly. It’s a foreign feeling for Alastor to be held - to be supported, physically and literally - and now he’s trapped in that paralyzing deer-in-headlights sensation again, unsure of what to do next.

Which…

Lucifer seems to pick up on. He guides Alastor’s hand, bringing it close and setting his red fingers over the pink blush marks on his cheeks.

“Hide my face so that it looks like we’re making out.” Lucifer mumbles.

And Alastor’s eyes flick down to his lips for one second, one rapid-fire second, one *so-fast-it-shouldn’t-really-count* second -

Still, at the sight of Lucifer’s face approaching his, there’s a weird flurry of nerves in his stomach and a warmth rises to his cheeks and his face is ~~even prettier from up close~~

Enough of that nonsense, Alastor fights with the treacherous voice in his head, *it is merely the angelic blood that is tempting* -

“O-KAY!” The angels cover their eyes again. “Round TWO? SERIOUSLY?! WE’LL - LEAVE YOU TO IT!”

They scramble over each other to fly away, and it’s like they were never there to begin with. Lucifer looks down at Alastor, and his gold eyes sparkle under the sunlight.

“Fun, right?”

“What is?” Alastor’s voice is so quiet it’s barely perceptible.

“The dip! It’s always been my favourite part of any dance.”

Lucifer is infuriatingly nonchalant about the whole thing. He pulls Alastor onto his feet before he lets go; the more carefree Lucifer acts, the more displeasure Alastor feels, and he’s getting more and more unsettled about

why

this is so hard to understand,

why

he feels that terrifying urge to grab onto Lucifer,

and he needs to hurry up hurry up hurry up hurry up hurry up hurry up hurry up hurry up hurry up up up up up up up purge this feeling get back to business as usual -

"Lucifer."

His voice is unrecognizable even to himself - frantic and mangled and fraught with agitation. It makes Lucifer cast a worrying glance over at his direction, makes Alastor purposefully avoid his gaze, makes them both agonizingly tense in the aftereffects of their charade.

"Yeah, what?"

Alastor smiles through clenched teeth.

"Let's make a deal."

"HUH?"

God, Vaggie hates being in Heaven.

She drums her fingers on the countertop, half-listening as Sera communicates with Charlie. They seem to be at a standstill, and Vaggie gets up from her seat, too frustrated by the conversation to stay.

"Charlie." Vaggie murmurs. "I need some fresh air. I'm feeling a bit overwhelmed."

"Oh!" Charlie looks at her, concerned. "Of course. Do you want me to go with you?"

"Thanks babe, but there's no need. I'll be back in a minute."

After Vaggie closes the door behind her, she makes her way to the open window and gazes out at the endless stretch of fluffy clouds. Heaven is undoubtedly beautiful; truly the

definition of perfection.

But it stirs up difficult emotions for her, being here, and she really wants to go back to the safety of the Hotel.

“I wonder if Lucifer feels the same way.” Vaggie mutters to herself.

She’s so wrapped up in her thoughts that she doesn’t notice the two angels fly back - not until they crash *right* into her in their haste, and they all skid across the floor.

“HEY!” Vaggie glares at them. “What the fuck was *that* for?!”

“Oh! S - sorry.” One of them stammers. “We’re just - we needed to leave the king as soon as possible.”

“Why.”

The angel’s face turns red.

“I don’t think I should say it.”

“You said some weird shit about them earlier, too. Tell me what happened.” Vaggie threatens, brandishing her spear at them. Although she’s only half their height, they back up at the sight of her angelic weapon.

“Don’t stab me!” The angel cowers. “Okay, fine. The King of Hell and that - that sinner… they were doing unholy business.”

“Unholy *what?”*

“CARNAL RELATIONS!” The angel bellows. “Okay?! Is that what you wanted to hear?!”

Vaggie almost drops her weapon. “What did you say?”

“They were… ugh!” The other one cries. “You know! Wink wink nudge nudge? Bonking?! I mean, it’s one thing to do it behind closed doors, but they were doing it outdoors! In *public!”*

“What the actual fuck.” Vaggie can’t quite process this in her head. “You have got to be kidding me.”

“Why would we joke about this?” The angel looks offended. “I mean, they’re at it right now!”

Vaggie turns away, and she thinks back on the past couple of months. The scandalous images. The demon who told Lucifer to use her back door. The way that Lucifer wore Alastor’s jacket.

Charlie had enlisted her help to find out what the hell was going on between the two of them, and so her mind races with a singular thought -

She has to know.

She flies over to the doors - slams it open - pays no heed to the indignation on Sera's face as she interrupts their meeting.

"Sorry, your highness." Vaggie says quickly. "I gotta talk to my girlfriend for a sec."

Sera sighs, her hand in her hair. "Very well. We weren't getting anywhere, anyway. Let us take a quick break."

"Thank you." Vaggie bows without even thinking, her years of being an exorcist still ingrained within her. She exits the room, and after a moment, Charlie follows her out.

"What's wrong?" Charlie touches her face worriedly. "Are you hurt? Do you feel sick?"

"No, but you might start to."

"Huh?" Charlie looks adorably confused, although Vaggie doesn't have the time to admire it at the moment. She lowers her voice down to a whisper, not wanting the seraphim angels to listen in.

"Do you remember there was a demon who came up to your dad, asking for an autograph?"

"Yeah…"

"And do you remember she mentioned something about a boy toy?"

"Uh huh…" Charlie looks increasingly concerned.

"Charlie."

"Yeah?"

Vaggie mouths,

THE

BOY

TOY

IS

ALASTOR.

Charlie audibly gasps at this. "WHAT! Are… are you sure? Why would you say that?"

"The angels said they were…"

Vaggie thinks about how to phrase it politely.

“Fucking in public.” And then she slaps her forehead. “Oh, shit. Sorry, Charlie. I don’t know how else to say it. I’m not great at sugarcoating things.”

"I - " Charlie takes in a deep breath to calm herself down. To her credit, she doesn’t look disgusted; more than anything, her expression is one of deliberation. “Okay, let’s think about this for a second. If my dad and Alastor are in a relationship, they probably wouldn’t, um, have sex up here. In public. Right?”

This does make Vaggie hesitate. “Right.”

“So I’m sure they have their own reasons.” Charlie says. “But, hmm. My dad… and Alastor… dating…”

She trails off, and she looks a bit conflicted.

“I guess I’ll ask him later.”

Lucifer’s slack-jawed expression is starting to concern Alastor.

“So what do you say?” He takes a step closer. “The deal is quite simple, really. Do something for me, and I’ll owe you a little favour.”

At this, Lucifer finally springs back to life. “WAIT wait wait. Wait. Seriously? I mean, what do you even want from me?”

“Oh, nothing much.” Alastor does his best to sound blasé. “Just a little bit of your blood!”

Lucifer wheezes. “What the - *why?”*

Alastor struggles to come up with an excuse. But he also doesn’t want to say the truth - that he needs to figure out what this disturbingly incessant emotion is - so he side-steps the question entirely.

“Do we have a deal?” Alastor says instead. Lucifer looks at him searchingly, like he’s trying to solve the conundrum behind his words. It’s an impossible task, and eventually, he lets out a resigned sigh.

“Nope.”

“No?” He can’t believe his ears. “Is a favour insufficient? What do you desire instead?”

When Lucifer doesn’t respond, Alastor feels an increasing sense of desperation. “Money? Fame? What is it? I can assure you, I am capable of granting even your wildest dreams! Or do you not believe me?”

“I believe you, god!” Lucifer says hurriedly. “Look - I’ll give you some blood. Just, uh. There’s no need for a deal.”

Alastor turns his sentence over in his head. The more he mulls it over, the more mystified he feels. “You would… give me your blood… in exchange for nothing?”

“Yeah.”

“Why?”

“Ho-oooooh, boy.” He seems exasperated. “Look. I’ve got a lot of blood, and if you need it for some secret, *super-important* reason, I’ll give it to you.”

After a beat, Lucifer adds:

“Friends help each other out, right?”

“Is that so?” Alastor is momentarily floored. “You seemed quite reluctant when I suggested this earlier.”

“Uh-huh… what?” Lucifer frowns. “You brought this up before?”

“Why, yes! On the roof.”

“We’re *always* on the roof. Which time?”

Alastor’s eye twitches; he’s a little vexed that Lucifer can’t pinpoint the exact moment. “The night before the ball. You don’t recall? Has your memory deteriorated that much from your age?”

“I REMEMBER!” Lucifer says hotly. “After our fight, right?”

“Indeed. The fight that *I* won!”

“You’ve only won two times, so don’t get all cocky about it - wait.” Lucifer shakes his head. “That’s not the point. *The point is,* you were clearly only saying that as a joke.”

He hesitates.

“And I don’t think you’re joking, this time.”

“I am not.”

They look at each other, and Alastor stills under his resolute gaze. Doing all this, with no expectations? Nothing in return? No strings attached? “Are you certain?”

“Oh, quit asking already.” Lucifer huffs. “You want it or not?”

“Yes.” Alastor sounds far too keen, and he tries to regain his composure. “Just making sure! Can’t have you regretting it afterwards, hmm?”

Lucifer sends a withering glare over at him, but he conjures up a small lancet needle anyway. He pierces his pointer finger with it and some blood spills out, glistening like liquid gold.

“Wait, why did I do it this way?” Lucifer scrunches up his nose. “I need a vial or something - ”

“Unnecessary.”

Alastor grabs Lucifer’s hand, his red fingers encircling it in its entirety, and he brings it up to his face. It doesn’t even look like blood; it’s so shiny it glimmers, and the ichor is beautiful against Lucifer’s dark grey skin.

Alastor pulls his hand closer,

and puts Lucifer’s index finger into his mouth.

“Oh - ” Lucifer lets out a breathy noise, jumping at the contact, but he doesn’t try to back away. His slender finger settles on Alastor’s tongue, and he licks up the entire length,

from knuckle…

to joint…

to the very tip,

and Alastor continues to slide his tongue around his finger, sucking it eagerly. His skin tastes as good as he smells, and he’s starting to feel gleeful that he was *right,* that he merely wanted to sample a taste of Lucifer.

“Fucking *hell,* Alastor.” Lucifer swallows, and the sound of his name makes him look over, Alastor’s eyes heavy-lidded.

“Hmm?”

Lucifer turns bright red and clams up after that, so Alastor concentrates on the task at hand.

I wonder how the rest of him tastes, he thinks - can’t stop his eyes from looking at wherever Lucifer is exposed - his alabaster neck, his ombré arms, his delicate collarbones. He can only see a maddeningly small amount of skin, and he has the sudden impulse to yank Lucifer’s shirt off, to see what he looks like underneath -

Don’t be ridiculous.

Alastor thrusts the thought out of his head; takes his time, lapping up his finger; and when his tongue finally swipes against the droplets of blood-

he forcibly flings Lucifer's hand out from his mouth.

"Ugh." Alastor recoils, and he feels almost ill. "Revolting."

"What?" Lucifer blinks. Alastor wipes his mouth with a handkerchief, and he wants something to wash down the taste.

"Are you aware that your blood is *sweet?"* Alastor squints at him. "All that sugar you consume has made its way into your blood stream. Good job!"

Lucifer looks - dumbfounded, then confused, then angry, his expressions changing at a breakneck pace. "Are you *serious* right now?"

"Unfortunately, yes. That was appalling. Remind me never to do that again!"

"APPALLING?!" Lucifer echoes, absolutely outraged. "Do you know how rare it is to taste *this?!"*

"It is for the best that we didn't embark on a deal." Alastor sneers. "What a waste of a favour that would have been."

"You fucking - you have no idea how lucky you are."

"On the contrary! I believe my luck ran out the day I met you."

"Feeling's mutual, douchebag!"

So it wasn't his blood. Alastor thinks frantically. *What exactly is it then?*

Lucifer's skin *does* taste good. But not in a way that he wanted to eat him, necessarily. It was more…

His head starts to hurt again, and Alastor doesn't want to dwell on it any further. "Never mind all that! I can sense Niffty nearby. Perhaps at the ice cream parlour?"

"This isn't some excuse to get ice cream again, is it?"

"Of course not! I'm not *you."* Alastor jabs a finger onto his chest, and although Lucifer scowls at the motion, he doesn't push him away. "Let's make haste."

"Fine."

Still, as they walk beside each other, he can't help but glance at Lucifer's bare neck.

Sera may be stubborn, but Charlie is stubborn…er. She's stubborner.

(That's a word, right? Probably? Charlie thinks.)

Sure, they were chosen as the Decoy Team©, but she plans to use this opportunity as wholly as possible, and Charlie gestures towards her stack of paper.

"Sera, I just don't think you've given my Hotel a real chance." She says. "If they become reformed, wouldn't it be better for everyone involved? There would be less war, less terror, less… you know. Fighting!"

"Princess Morningstar." Sera sighs. "It's an interesting idea. I do think having kinder souls would be beneficial for Heaven and Hell. But how many people are even at your hotel? How many are committed to actually changing for the better - and not because they just want to get to Heaven?"

When Sera takes a step closer, Charlie takes a step back. "Whatever they do now, it sounds like they're purely motivated by self-interest. You know in your heart that it's not enough."

"I know that *you* don't know that for sure!" Charlie retorts. "You haven't even seen my people! I mean, if I can at least bring in more guests at my Hotel, could you reconsider?"

"If you are able to," Sera says firmly, "then at least Hell will have better citizens."

They stand off, staring at each other, and Emily flies right in-between.

"Let's stop here!" She says hurriedly. "A break would be good, right?"

Charlie snaps up when she hears Emily's voice, and - without even realizing it - her demon horns had been slowly extending upwards. She pats her forehead to make them recede, and she manages to nod.

"Right." Charlie's voice is subdued. She doesn't normally let herself get too down about things, but this is definitely one of those rare moments.

"I think it's best if Lucifer and that demon came back." Sera looks over at the angel chaperones disapprovingly. "Seeing as you two refused to accompany them, I will have Emily go pick them up."

"Sorry, your highness." The angel says awkwardly. "We just had some ethical concerns."

“Which you refuse to elaborate on.” Sera sounds irked. “We’ll discuss this later. Emily, can you let the sinner know I’ll speak with him first? Lucifer can wait in the hallway while we’re chatting.”

At the sound of her father’s name, Charlie harks back to the things that Vaggie said, the boy toy comment, the strange way the angels were behaving… and she can’t help but feel a little betrayed.

If he IS dating Alastor, Charlie thinks worriedly, *why didn’t he tell me? Is he scared of what I would say about it? Does he think I’ll judge him?*

“I’ll be back!” Emily says cheerfully. She’s already out the door when Charlie finds the strength to chase after her, running as fast as she can.

“Emily, wait!” Charlie stops her, and she can feel Sera staring at her back. It had crossed her mind to ask Emily to help them, to look for Niffty, but it’s much too conspicuous in the open air of Heaven. More importantly, it could get her into trouble, too.

So she swallows down the request and says something else.

“Just - ”

Charlie pauses.

“Can you tell my dad that… I love him? And I’ll support him no matter what.”

Emily looks so moved that she has tears in her eyes. “Oh, I definitely will!”

They end up eating ice cream anyway. Alastor is hard-pressed to find another shop like this one in Hell, one that caters to his palate so specifically, and he’ll definitely miss it. He’s pushing the rest of the cone into his mouth when Lucifer asks:

“Did it help, though?”

Alastor tilts his head.

“Did what help?”

“The blood.” Lucifer looks at him. “Did it answer anything for you?”

Alastor taps his chin, thinking about the best way to avoid answering.

“In a way.” He smiles indifferently. “But in another, it has only created more questions.”

He can feel Lucifer wait for him to clarify, which he doesn’t plan to. Truthfully, the painful throbbing in his mind makes a return, and it’s getting harder to concentrate on his surroundings. He places a hand on his head, and when the thudding doesn’t cease, Alastor looks around for a place to rest.

His eyes land on a flower garden, blooming with a profusion of multicoloured roses. There’s a duck pond in the centre, and at the front, he spies a golden bench, engraved with celestial designs.

“Let’s go over there, shall we?”

Without waiting for a reply, Alastor walks over as quickly as possible. He perches on the edge of the seat; the metal is cool under his hands, but it does little to soothe him.

He feels a shadow loom over him, and he already knows who it is.

“You look kinda awful.” Lucifer admits.

“Such tender words! You are a truly gifted orator.”

Lucifer raises his hand, like he wants to reach out to him -

but then crosses his arms instead.

“Are you thinking about something?” Lucfer settles on saying. "You really shouldn’t do that. Your brain’s gonna get all scrambled.”

It’s a little disconcerting how easily he can pick up on his emotions. Alastor smiles harder, trying to regain some semblance of control. “I am merely bothered by the sunlight. It is *much* too incessant.”

“The sunlight?” Lucifer plays along, even though they both know it’s not the reason. “I mean, that’s easy enough to fix.”

He spreads his wings out, which effectively block the rays from going into Alastor’s eyes. The warm light from Heaven illuminates Lucifer from behind; he glows with that transcendental brilliance again, looking every bit like an angel who belongs in Heaven - not Hell.

It makes Alastor feel a prickling of resentment, and he ducks his head down to avoid looking at him.

“Hey, uh.” Lucifer sounds stilted. Awkward. “I know this whole thing sucks. But we’ll get her back. And then she can go on your radio show again, or whatever.”

Of course. Lucifer is under the impression that he's thinking about Niffty. Alastor *is* rather concerned about her wellbeing, but he can feel her in his head - and she seems… oddly happy. So he knows that she's secure, for the time being.

"Ah, yes." Alastor's smile widens. "I thought you were upset about that? Didn't you say it was a set-up?"

"It definitely was!" Lucifer shoots back. "What the hell *was* that, even? It was pretty much an hour of her talking about how *awesome* and *wonderful* and *funny* you are."

"All accurate statements, don't you think?"

"Wow. Let's add modest to that list." Lucifer deadpans.

He pauses for a moment, and then smiles ruefully.

"But, y'know. That whole experience was… fun? Plus, she's a pretty good dancer."

"Is she better than me?" Alastor says reproachfully.

He - those words weren't supposed to come out.

And *especially* not in that manner.

Lucifer looks like he's suppressing a laugh. "Oh. My. GOD, you are so vain. You can't handle someone *else* being a good dancer?"

Before Alastor can retaliate, he feels another headache coming, and he has to put his hand on his forehead. He takes in a deep breath, and feels Lucifer shoot a concerned look at him.

"Headache?"

"No." Alastor says through gritted teeth.

"Liar."

In the periphery of his vision, Alastor can see Lucifer's hand approaching him again, before pulling back at the last second. When Alastor looks up, his hand is still hovering in the air. Uncertain. Hesitant.

"What is it."

Lucifer looks surprised that he got caught, even though he wasn't being subtle at all.

"You seemed to like it when I pet your ears before. So I was just about to…" He groans. "Never mind."

Alastor looks askance at his dark grey hands, small yet strong. Recollects how it felt the last time he pet his ears - the electricity - the comfort - Lucifer's throwaway sentence, *how are your ears so cute* -

“Well, don’t stop now.”

“What?”

Alastor dips his head back down. “You should finish what you started.”

he can hear Lucifer gulp. waver.

and then;

he feels his gentle hand, placed atop his head. runs his fingers up his ears… past his scalp… down his hair… and his touch is slow. cautious.

like Alastor is delicate to handle.

it’s not something he would normally approve of - he doesn’t enjoy being mollycoddled - but the tranquil movement makes him relax into his touch. that hummingbird-like beating happens again to his heart;

head dizzy,

mind spinning,

can’t keep himself propped up;

so he leans forward, putting his head onto Lucifer’s chest.

Lucifer jolts at this, but he keeps stroking his ears, and Alastor keeps his head on him, listening intently to the beating of Lucifer’s heart. it’s steady and ever-pulsing, a reassuring metronome.

although, it’s a little quick.

Alastor opens his eyes to stare down at Lucifer’s waist, narrow and small. he’s always found other people’s bodies repulsive, but he wants to see more of Lucifer, somehow, and ~~it feels good when he holds him -~~

don’t think about that.

he digs his claws into the picnic bench, gripping on for dear life.

but he’s still staring-staring-staring- can’t stop himself - doesn’t want to stop - his headache roars back with an alarming vengeance and -

he lets go.

and just does what he wants.

He wraps both of his arms around Lucifer’s waist and pulls him close, his head still on his chest. There’s an airy delight that swoops through Alastor’s stomach, so satisfying and arresting that he can only think of one word:

Finally!

Alastor buries his face in deeper.

Finally!

Alastor lets out a pleased sigh, breathing in his scent.

Finally!

Lucifer puts both of his hands on Alastor's head now, carefully stroking his ears.

And his headache, miraculously, disappears.

"Wait, look over there!"

Alastor lifts his head up, still keeping his arms wrapped around Lucifer's waist, and he peers over to where he's pointing. A group of yellow ducks pitter-patter on the outskirts of the pond, and…

A tall deer walks with them.

"Wow! Doesn't that look like the stained glass window?" Lucifer sounds enraptured. "In our music room."

"Oh, is that 'our' room now?"

"We rebuilt it together!" Lucifer shoots back, annoyed. "How else would you categorize it?"

"I believe that *I* did most of the work there." Alastor simpers. Lucifer glares at him, and his grip on his head tightens.

"No, I did."

"I did."

"I DID!"

“I - ”

“Lucifer?”

The voice is decidedly familiar. They both turn to look, and -

It’s that little Seraphim. Emily.

Although, her face is strangely bright red, and she studiously looks away to avoid making eye contact.

“Hi! It’s me.” She laughs nervously. “I am so sorry to interrupt your… rose garden… date. I can come by later!”

“Oh!” Lucifer pulls his hands out of his hair, and Alastor drops his arms to his side. “No, no. We were just, uh - ”

“It’s okay!” Emily smiles brightly. “I just *love* love, you know? There’s a well by the corner, if you want to make a wish! I can give you a coin.”

The word 'love' startles Alastor. They may have participated in a romantic sham earlier, but - they certainly aren’t doing that now.

Alastor looks at Lucifer. Being romantically linked, with *him?*

and -

the idea of romance, in *general?*

His headache starts to come back, and Alastor massages his temples with his fingers. He - no. He won’t think about it right now.

The rustling of leaves distracts him, and Alastor glances to the side. The deer is the source of the noise; it steps elegantly, purposefully, past the rose bushes, past the pond -

and it nuzzles one of the ducks.

Alastor can’t seem to tear his eyes away.

Chapter End Notes

FAQ:
- I will not include Alastor's mom or Lucifer's siblings. I don't have enough info on them bc they're not in the show. I also won't have Sir Pentious - I love him! But his presence would throw the plot in a totally different direction.

Fun Facts:
- Alastor talked about drinking his blood in ch. 9, and at the time Lucifer said "over my dead body."
- You already know this, but it's all about the HANDS so that's why I got Lucifer to draw blood from his finger!
- This is the 4th time Lucifer said Alastor's name (ch. 8, 12, 16)
- He pet his ears in ch. 14, and also the demon autograph boy-toy comment is from the same chapter!
- The stained glass window with the duck/deer is from ch. 3
- The entire head-patting scene is in lower case to avoid any sort of Capital Letters ruining their moment!!

Don't hate me: I can't update next Friday. I have some personal complications so… I'll see you in 2 weeks, Friday June 7! Mark your calendars 'cuz it's gonna be an important chapter!!

The Suffering

Chapter Notes

CH. 20 FANART:
- drawn by @dirtgrubber
- drawn by @tomiya_art
- drawn by @of-spaceships-and-cats
- drawn by @otsmosis
- drawn by @grijannax: 1 + 2
- drawn by: @kayray-amazing12345

Seeing all your beautiful art tagged as “Of Saints and Sinners” or “OSAS” makes me SO HAPPY! I feel like we’ve become such a nice community. If you have any fanart, please share with me on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or on Twitter: @morningstar_ao3, and if it's on Instagram, link me!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Charlie wanted me to tell you that she loves and supports you.”

“Uh, what?”

Emily turns around; she’s walking a little ways ahead of them, as though she were giving them some space. “That’s all she said!”

“O…kay.” Lucifer furrows his brows, but nods anyway. “I love Charlie too, of course.”

Emily beams at this. “So, I’ll guide you two to the meeting. I’ll be up in the sky if you need anything! And please, I *really* didn’t mean to interrupt, so just pretend I’m not here.”

Lucifer gapes at her as she flies away, and he doesn’t even know how to remedy her two wrong impression(s):

1. that he and Alastor were boyfriends
2. and they were on a *date*

both of which were absolutely astonishing, because now he feels the need to reexamine everything that’s happened. It’s like he’s made of jello, wobbly, a bit weak at the knees, and his mind races with a video montage of only Alastor on loop: blushing-hesitating-smiling-sighing-hugging-

Shit, that’s cute. Lucifer thinks. *He’s cute.*

And.

He slams the brakes on his thought process, because *why* does he keep thinking that? What the fuck - how the -

It's so shocking that he puts his hands on his face, and takes in a deep breath.

"Ughhhhhhhhhh." Lucifer says eloquently. Alastor is walking ahead of him, but at the sound of his groan, he turns around.

"Did you say something?"

"NOPE!"

Lucifer shoots an unconvincing grin at his direction, which makes Alastor slowly swivel his head forward. Once he's certain he isn't looking at him anymore, Lucifer lets out a sigh.

Sure, he's always had a fondness for cute things. *Sure,* it's why he made Razzle, Dazzle, and Kee-Kee look the way they do. *Sure,* Alastor is cute, which is… fine.

Probably.

(NOT.)

You Stupid Idiot What The Hell Is Wrong With You?

Lucifer is seriously getting freaked out now, because he vividly recalls the first time he met him at the hotel. Alastor had been the walking, talking embodiment of a nightmare. He had a creepy, insincere smile. Eyes that were startlingly cold. His every action done for the sole purpose of pissing Lucifer off.

And at the moment?

Lucifer can't help but notice Alastor's elegant and lean figure; his ramrod-straight posture; his fluffy deer ears that barely conceal his tiny antlers; his bright eyes, framed with ridiculously long lashes.

As though he can feel his stare, Alastor glances over suspiciously.

"What is it *now?"*

"Nothing." Lucifer avoids his eyes and looks at his mouth instead, which,

fuck,

that's worse,

that's WAY worse, because now he's thinking about blood drinking and Alastor's tongue and his heavy stare and the languid movement of him licking all the way up to his fingertips and hot hot hot hot hot hot hot that was hot *he's hot* -

"ACK!"

Lucifer starts to cough violently at the thought, and Alastor fixes him with a baffled look.

“You are behaving quite strangely.”

“Just - ” Lucifer wheezes, “don’t mind me!”

There are a few things that Lucifer can put aside in his head. Brief thoughts that his friend is cute? Okay. ~~Not really, but.~~ He can compartmentalize it, brush it under the carpet.

But multiple thoughts about the Hotness™ of your friend?

Nope. NOPE. Stop that right now, Lucifer chides himself. He braces for the insult that Alastor will undoubtedly throw, but he’s met with absolute silence; he ignores Lucifer and continues to walk instead, which is…

… not how he usually acts.

Lucifer watches Alastor’s back. He had been unnaturally quiet after the garden, looking deep in thought. And every now and then, he would place his hand discreetly on his head, like he’s still plagued by that mysterious pain of his.

Not a good sign, at all. It worries him, and Lucifer tries to catch up -

- but at the sound of his footsteps, Alastor starts to walk a bit faster, and he suddenly realizes that he may be avoiding him.

His pace slows down until he stops moving, and Lucifer stands there in contemplation. Alastor’s reaction was not wholly unexpected. If *he* felt self-conscious about everything that occurred today, *Alastor* was probably taking it ten times harder, and he’s suddenly concerned about the ramifications in the aftermath of their farce.

Are we gonna pretend that this never happened? Or is it gonna be so awkward that we won’t talk anymore?

“Hold up.” Lucifer calls out. They’re rather far from each other now, and there’s a seemingly endless distance between them. “Can you just - HOLD UP!”

Alastor stops walking, but his back is still towards him, making it impossible to see his expression.

“Okay, I *know* you’re stressed.” Lucifer’s words come out in halting, incoherent bursts. “I know we’ve - done… a lot, today. But, um. I don’t want to make you uncomfortable. And - if you need some time alone, I get it.”

Alastor turns around at an inhuman speed.

“Is that what you think?” There’s a tinge of outrage in his voice. “That I want you to leave?”

“I mean. Look at this!” Lucifer gestures to the gaping space between them. “What else could it be?!”

Alastor makes his way back to him, his every step quick and determined.

“Do you enjoy playing the fool?”

Lucifer feels a frisson of excitement when he hears Alastor’s caustic words. *This* is what he’s used to. *This* is what he wants to see.

“Better than being a jackass like *you.”*

“Oh, that is quite the falsehood you are spreading.” Alastor sneers. He’s right in front of Lucifer now, and his eyes flash a brilliant crimson under the sunlight. “I recall that you once called me considerate, did you not?”

“Wow. So you remember *every* little compliment I give you?” Lucifer teases, and Alastor’s eye spasms at this.

“I don’t forget a single thing that someone tells me. But it appears that you have trouble remembering things, hmm?”

“I can remember the *important* things!”

“Such as?”

Alastor leans down, and he’s so close his red hair brushes over the tip of Lucifer’s nose. It’s entrancing, being this near, and he momentarily forgets how to speak. Alastor’s smile broadens the longer he stays silent.

“As I said. You should probably,”

Alastor lifts up a finger,

“work on your memory.”

and he taps Lucifer’s forehead. He squeezes his eyes shut at the contact, and Alastor’s finger lingers between his brows. Eventually, he pulls his hand back, and his self-satisfied grin is replaced with a more serious look; one of contemplation.

“Lucifer.”

He says his name softly.

Like it means something.

Like it matters.

It takes a while for him to get the rest of his words out. Alastor looks like he’s fighting an internal struggle, his smile strained and tense. He peers at Lucifer inquisitively. Runs a hand down his neck.

And then he lets out a sigh, sounding absolutely defeated.

“Nothing you do makes me uncomfortable.”

Emily soars in the sky, and although she can’t hear a single word, she can still see Alastor and Lucifer as they walk beneath her.

To be honest, her initial impressions of them were rather different. Alastor had been superficially polite, and obviously bothered that he was up in Heaven. And Lucifer? His eccentric nature was fairly unexpected.

But…

Emily looks down at them as they walk side-by-side. There’s a sense of ease when they step together, an effortless camaraderie, and it’s rather endearing to see them exchange covert glimpses at each other.

If Alastor looks forward, Lucifer peeks over at him.

And when Lucifer averts his gaze, Alastor sneaks a look.

She feels like she’s intruding, and she looks to the fluffy clouds ahead of her instead.

Okay! Let’s give them some more space.

She flies a little higher, a little faster.

Alastor is not having a good time.

He's having trouble reconciling Emily's words with what happened today; her insinuating that they were lovers surprised him, because.

Well.

They hadn't been acting any differently than usual.

Is that what sweethearts did? But what would that even constitute, being *romantic* with someone? Alastor doesn't have much experience with love in any vague definition of the term; it had never been his priority, nor in his interest to engage with romance.

He flicks his eyes over to Lucifer.

He's willing to confess that he has *some* feelings of fondness towards him. And if he had to choose, he'd much prefer spending time with Lucifer than with someone else. But is that enough? Is that all it takes?

Thinking about it so much makes Alastor's headache returns, and he grits his teeth at the pain. It had only receded when he held Lucifer earlier.

How curious. Alastor thinks. *What if I simply…*

He carefully places a hand on Lucifer's shoulder. His hand is so big it covers the entirety of his shoulder blade, his red fingers a stark contrast against the white of his jacket.

"Huh?" Lucifer tilts his head. "What?"

"Keep quiet for a moment."

Lucifer scowls, but Alastor pays no heed, because - it's extraordinary - a miracle cure - he *does* feel better, his ache becoming nonexistent.

Which means…

what, exactly?

That he should run to Lucifer whenever his mind troubles him? How absolutely ludicrous.

Something else happens in his head; a familiar tugging sensation, indicating that Niffty is nearby. Alastor's deer ears twitch, trying to hear her voice.

"Niffty is around here somewhere." He mutters. "Let us take our leave."

"Really?" Lucifer looks doubtful. "Don't tell me she's at the ice cream parlour. I'm not gonna fall for that one again."

"You certainly seemed happy to return there. Didn't you get *three* scoops of ice cream when we went back?"

“So what? You got *four!”* Lucifer’s shouting draws the attention of Emily, who looks at them curiously.

“Are you two okay?” She yells from above.

“Oh, just splendid!” Alastor calls out. “I only wish to inform you that I won’t be able to attend the meeting. Please do send my regrets to the other seraphim.”

She flies down and lands in front of them. “Normally, I would totally be okay with that! It’s just, you kinda have to come? She specifically asked for you, Alastor.”

“Hmm.” This throws a wrench in his plans. “Did she require both of our presences?”

“Oh, no. She wanted to speak with you first.”

“What an honour!” Alastor pastes on an insincere smile. He glances at Lucifer from the corner of his eye. “In that case, I will go alone. As for you…”

Alastor conjures up a shadow minion, and drops it into Lucifer’s palms. It’s cat-shaped today, with whiskers and a tiny nose. “To keep you company.”

He looks at him, trying to communicate with his eyes:

It will help you locate Niffty. If something happens, it will report back to me.

Lucifer seems like he understands, somewhat. The shadow creature latches on affectionately to his thumb, and he pats its head.

“You should really stop petting those things. They are quite busy.” Alastor says begrudgingly.

“But they like it!” Lucifer protests. It purrs as though in agreement, and he sends Alastor a smug smile. “What’d I tell ya?”

Before he can pulverize the shadow being into little pieces, Emily pipes in.

“Let’s go, Alastor! Lucifer, please come by later when you’re ready.”

“Um, okay.” Lucifer offers a wave good-bye. The shadow kitten also sends an (infernal) wave at Alastor. “I’ll be outside, then.”

“That was delicious.” Niffty says happily. She’s all full now, and the angel smiles lovingly at her. “Oooh, now here comes the best part!”

Niffty starts tidying up the table, throwing her trash into a bag with reckless abandon.

“Oh! You don’t need to do that.” The angel tries to stop her, but Niffty just shakes her head.

“I love to clean!” She shrieks. “I wanna do it!”

“Really? Well, sure then!” The angel looks at her gratefully. “You are such a sweetie. You know, I can’t even get my staff to clean the café on most days.”

“What? But there's nothing better than cleaning!” Niffty protests.

“If you ask them, visiting an amusement park is more fun, I guess.”

“An amusement park?” Niffty pauses for a moment. “Is there one here?”

“Oh, yeah. At least, there used to be! But we can fly at any speed, so there wasn’t much of point in having one around.” The angel shrugs. “They replaced it with a water park recently.”

“Aww.” Niffty feels disappointed. “I wanna go to one now, though.”

Maybe there’s one down in Hell? She thinks. *I’ll ask Alastor.*

Niffty throws the garbage bag over her shoulder. “I’ll toss this out!”

“Okay, thank you! You are such a charmer!” The angel coos, and Niffty squints at her with some skepticism.

It’s been fun, but also spooky being up here. Everyone is too nice, and she finds herself missing Lute a little - her crassness, her prickly nature, that permanent scowl etched on her face. She reminded Niffty so much of the people in Hell.

As she exits the café, she wonders if she’ll ever see her again.

It makes him waaaaaay too relieved that Alastor admitted it -

he fucking said that he's *comfortable* with Lucifer!

Ha-HA! No more second-guessing! He thinks elatedly. *No more worrying that I'm doing something weird! I'm just gonna do what-EVER I wanna do. Take that, idiot.**

(*aka Alastor.)

But in the back of his mind, he knows that something is amiss.

He wants a little more from Alastor than he should. He likes being with him a little too much. He's not as bothered by Emily's misunderstanding as he ought to have been. It's microscopic; the tiniest bit too far; and even so, he can't help looking for more and more and more and more and-

Lucifer lets out a haggard sigh, which makes the shadow minion pat his shoulder comfortingly. He sends it a smile as it wags its tail.

"Thanks, bud."

It purrs again, a low rumble, and then it starts to sniff the air. The shadow creature seems to pick up on something, because it jumps off his shoulder and scampers nimbly through the promenade.

"Wait up!" Lucifer hurries after the tiny cat, and they weave their way through the crowd of angels - past the numerous storefronts - past the rose garden - all the way until they make it -

back to the ice cream parlour.

Great.

"You *really* liked that ice cream, huh?" Lucifer says accusingly, as though he were speaking to Alastor himself. The creature titters, but in the corner of his eye, he spies a small angel wearing a blue dress, lugging a comically oversized garbage bag.

"Hey. She kind of looks like…" Lucifer squints.

Rubs his eyes, and focuses harder.

"Niffty?"

She looks around in confusion when she hears the name. "Did someone call for me?"

"Niffty!" Lucifer flies over to her, and her jaw drops when he lands.

"The royal bad boy! I missed you!"

Niffty climbs up his leg, as per usual. The shadow being follows suit, climbing up his other leg, and now he has two stubborn critters clinging onto his pants.

“I missed you too.” Lucifer looks at the discarded trash bag, which Niffty threw down in her haste. “What’re you… uh… are you collecting garbage?”

“I’m cleaning!”

“In Heaven?”

“Yeah!” Niffty says cheerfully. “What are you doing here, sir?”

“We’re actually here for you. C’mon, let’s head back to the Hotel.” Lucifer points downwards to Hell.

“Oh, YAY!” Before he can remove her from his leg, she looks at him pensively. “Wait. Can we look for Lute first?”

“You *want* to go find her?” Lucifer says incredulously. “Why?”

“I wanna say goodbye!”

“Uh…huh…” Lucifer has never been able to understand Niffty. He ponders over it - if they’re together, at least he can protect her from any potential harm. “Sure, sure. Let’s go look for her.”

Alastor couldn’t care less about this bureaucratic nonsense.

He’s a little bored watching Sera and Charlie. They’re engaged in a heated debate, and it’s obvious that Charlie is feeling agitated; her demon horns have fully extended, and her eyes are red from vexation.

Hmm. She truly is Lucifer’s daughter. Alastor thinks,

and then he gets annoyed that he’s thinking about Lucifer,

and then he feels even more annoyed that he’s annoyed about it in the first place,

and now his headache is threatening to worsen into an absolutely debilitating migraine.

To get his mind off of it, he tries to locate where his shadow being went. After a moment of searching, he can sense that it's around…

The ice cream parlour. How puzzling.

"Princess. Heaven and Hell have been separated for a reason." Sera says firmly. "And that is all I will say on that subject."

"Sera, *please* listen! You can't seriously think that - "

She lifts up her hand to silence Charlie. "Let's have a recess. All this arguing is leading us nowhere."

Charlie opens her mouth, about to disagree - but then she takes in a deep inhale instead. Alastor watches as her eyes slowly return to their usual gold colour.

"Okay. Yes, of course." There's a hint of frustration in her voice. "I'll be right back, then."

She closes the door quietly as she leaves the room. Even when upset, Charlie tries to avoid bothering other people. Alastor gazes at the shut door, and it crosses his mind that Lucifer would hate to see his daughter in agony -

Stop thinking about him, Alastor demands. It's easier said than done, and he clenches his radio cane tightly while trying to push him out of his head. Perhaps speaking with Charlie will distract him from his thoughts.

Vaggie is about to follow after Charlie when Alastor thrusts his cane onto the ground, stopping her in her tracks.

"Allow me to go to her."

"You?" She says skeptically. "You don't care about Charlie. What the hell would you even say to her?"

"Well now! I am her facility manager." He stands up and adjusts his overcoat. "I will advise her on the hotel, of course. I guarantee that she'll be better than ever after our chat, ha-ha!"

Vaggie looks at him with blatant mistrust, but she sits back down. "Alright, Alastor. I'll give you five minutes, but any longer than that and I'm going out there."

"Fair enough." Alastor shifts away into shadow, and rematerializes beside Charlie. She's looking out into the fluffy clouds, her elbows placed on the windowsill.

"Charlie, Charlie, Charlie." Alastor says patronizingly. "That was quite an awful display!"

She glares at him, but he continues to speak.

“Your little ‘Hazbin Hotel’ idea is so poorly contrived, and far too idealistic.” Alastor guffaws. “That seraphim approved those yearly exterminations in the first place! How did you *think* she was going to respond to your proposal?”

“Oh, fuck you, Alastor.” Charlie bemoans. She buries her face into her hands, and she sounds utterly crushed. “Like you give a shit.”

“Well, now! I do care a smidge.” Alastor shows this with his index finger and his thumb, keeping the distance as minute as possible. His words rouse Charlie, and she lifts her head up at this.

“Really?”

“Of course! I am still here, aren’t I?” Alastor shrugs. “Your hotel, while an utterly laughable notion - ”

“Hey!” Charlie protests.

“- does have the right idea behind it. Free food, free shelter, the tiniest glimmer of hope for those wretched souls to have a good life.” Alastor rests his arms on the window ledge. “So Heaven denied your request. Are you going to shut the hotel down, now?”

“No! At least… I don’t want to.” Charlie says slowly. “I’d like to support my people. And to help them become the best version of themselves.”

“What a pointless endeavour.” Alastor’s smile widens. “But then again, I expected nothing less from you.”

“Alastor, are you trying to make me feel better or worse?”

“Would you like to take a guess?”

They stand together in silence for a moment, looking out at the clouds. They’ve been in Heaven for so long that the sun has started to dip over the horizon, staining the sky pink and orange.

“All you can do now, Charlie, is stick to your misguided convictions.” Alastor finally says. “You care about improving sinners, despite knowing how futile it is. You want them to develop compassion, purely for their own self-betterment. Well, what are you going to do about it?”

She dwells on this, looking deep in thought.

“I’ll continue to help them. So long as I’m here, I’ll make Hell better for everyone. I just - I want them to be happy.”

It’s like she’s been reenergized, and Charlie starts to pace now. “Right! The Hazbin Hotel has always acted as a rehabilitation centre. If we keep the doors open to any and all sinners who would like to drop by - even for just a night - we can teach them how to develop good habits, take care of themselves, and learn to like who they are! But, um, in a healthy way, of course.”

“And you don’t need Heaven’s permission for *that,* now, do you?”

“I mean, even Sera admitted that it would be good to have nicer souls in Hell.” Charlie grins, and she finally looks like herself again. “I’ll show everyone that being aggressively kind is the way to go!”

“And as you embark on this useless journey, I will be there to watch you fail at every turn.” He cackles cruelly, but Charlie doesn’t seem offended; instead, she has a thoughtful expression on her face.

“Something on your mind?” He asks. Charlie lets out a nervous laugh.

“Just wanted to thank you, Alastor,” and then she mumbles under her breath, “or-am-I-supposed-to-call-you-step-dad?”

“What was that?”

“NOTHING!” Charlie says frantically. “Just, um, I guess we have a lot of work to do now. I’m going to redouble my efforts to promote the hotel! You’ll help, right?”

“Well.” Alastor thrusts his hand out, as if to shake. “Only if we make a deal.”

“Very funny, Alastor.”

Lute finally steels her resolve. She gets off of the roof and swoops around in the air, trying to see if she can find that nasty little abomination.

“I’ve started this, so I’ll finish it.” She mutters. “Once I get my hands on you, I’ll - ”

She lurches back when she spots the telltale figure of Lucifer, who is flanked on either side with a tiny shadow cat (?) thing, and a small blue angel.

“What the hell?” Lute slows down her pace, not wanting to draw suspicion to herself. “Why is *he* here?”

When the angel turns around, she realizes it’s not an angel at all. It’s - it’s that fucking -

“That shithead disguised herself!” Lute fumes. She looks at home with those wings and that blue dress, and it makes Lute reach new levels of anger. “I got you now, fucker.”

She keeps her aim at Niffty, and flies down like a bolt of lightning -

---

That’s when it happens.

Alastor feels his shadow minion yelping in his head, a warning signal that something is wrong - something is happening - to *Lucifer* - it makes his blood run cold, and there’s - a tug of concern; a rush of worry; he puts his hand on his head, and a flurry of awful thoughts run through his mind-

Is he trapped? Injured? Alastor winces at how loudly his shadow creature cries in his head, and he clenches his jaw, trying to keep himself stable.

“Excuse me.” Alastor’s voice is strained. “I have to take care of something.”

“Really?” Charlie gazes at him worriedly. “I think Sera wanted to speak to you - ”

“This is far more important.” He all but snarls, and he disappears through his shadow.

CLANG!

Lucifer blocks Lute’s attack with ease. The clashing impact lights a fire under him - he loves fighting, revels in the excitement that zips through him as he exchanges blows with someone,

and the last time this happened was when he fought Alastor -

Okay, stop thinking about him now, you're be-ing creeeeeeeeepy,

and Lucifer concentrates on Lute instead.

"Y'know, you should work on your ambushing skills." He smirks. "I could hear you from miles away."

He can't quite tamp down his adrenaline, so much so that he can feel his demon horns come out, his tail swishing in the air. Lute widens her eyes when she sees his transformation, and she takes a hurried step back.

"I'm not here for *you,* corrupted angel." Lute snarls, but he barely bats an eye at the insult. "Give me that thing over there."

She's referring to Niffty, and Lucifer shakes his head.

"You can talk to her, but she's got better things to do than - "

"I'M HERE!" Niffty shrieks, jumping up and down. "I'll go to you!"

She scampers over - quick as a flash - and she climbs atop of Lute's head with absolutely zero concern.

"Look at my wings!" Niffty says cheerfully. "You like 'em?"

"Hate it." Lute grits out, trying to shake her off. Niffty doesn't seem bothered at all, and she has both hands fisting the ends of Lute's hair.

"I knew you'd say that! We're leaving soon, so I wanted to say goodbye."

"Say goodbye to this, then - OW!" Niffty starts yanking Lute by her hair. "I command you to *stop!* You're gonna make me bald, swine!"

"Hehehehehehe. If anyone can pull off bald, it would be you, you bad girl." Niffty does let go, and she climbs down onto Lute's shoulder instead. She sits there comfortably, as though it were made for her, and Lute turns to face her.

Her expressions flip from confusion to anger to…

disappointment.

"Why are you like this?" Lute's voice breaks at the end. "You're not even afraid of me. Or sorry about what you did. You're just so… weird."

She puts her hand over her face, her eyebrows scrunched up in dismay, and Niffty looks at her worriedly. "What's wrong?"

“I’ve changed my mind.” Lute grinds out of her teeth. “There’s no use in killing someone as unhinged as you. You won’t understand why I’m doing any of this. And what’s worse is that you don’t even care that you - ”

Lute takes in a deep breath, and she steadies herself. “Get off me. Now.”

The whiplash in her emotions confuse him at first, and he watches her warily as Niffty pats Lute's hair.

And then he recognizes what’s happening.

It’s like looking into a mirror from the past; he can practically see himself in her suffering. Their circumstances aren’t equivalent, their experiences vastly differ from one another, but at the root of it all, pain is universal.

Why did you leave me behind?

And what do I do now, without you?

He reaches his hand out, wanting to express his condolences in some way. Adam may have been a grade-A asshole, but Lucifer has more empathy for her situation than anger, and he’s intimately familiar with the loss; the loneliness; the confusion. Lashing out at anyone and everyone, just to feel something again.

Lute still has her eyes covered, so she doesn’t notice him coming closer, his steps quiet and hesitant.

“Hey, uh - ”

She flinches, so startled that she swipes her sword wildly -

- and it slashes right across his palm.

Lucifer rips his hand back much too quickly, and the momentum forces him onto the ground - the wound starts to burn painfully - her sword must have hit a vein, because his golden blood spills out in rivulets, dripping down his arm like an aureate fountain.

“How dare you lay a hand on him.”

They all snap their heads up when they hear it, but Lucifer already recognizes his voice:

Alastor looks larger than life, his tentacles keeping him afloat in the air, and he’s brimming with barely-contained anger.

“You appear to have a death wish.”

Alastor speaks calmly, but his voice is pure radio static.

“I can grant that for you.”

He drops down from the air and crouches beside Lucifer, placing his arm in front of him without even thinking about it. He had felt strangely powerless, watching Lucifer getting hurt; upset at himself, for not being there earlier - and then it all fizzles into befuddlement, confused as to why he’s so worked up by it.

Alastor’s eyes glow a brilliant red, clicking away with radio dials inside of them,

tick

tick

tick

tick -

“Alastor.”

Lucifer’s tail wraps around his wrist, long and sharp, and he pauses at the contact.

“It was an accident. And besides, it’s just a small cut!” He waves his arm around, and the blood starts to gush out. “Oh! Whoops. Probably shouldn’t have moved it.”

Looking at his golden wound makes Alastor's heart clench painfully, the pain so visceral it almost feels like *he's* the one who got hurt. It’s worse than suffering through his own headache, and he kneels down beside him.

“Show me your injury.”

“Seriously, it’s not-”

“Now.”

Lucifer seems rather perplexed, but he still puts his hand out dutifully. Alastor cradles it carefully with his palm, and… Lucifer was right. It’s a superficial wound, and as long as there’s some pressure on it, he’ll stop bleeding soon enough.

All he needs is something to wrap it.

Something.

To wrap it.

Except, for the life of him, Alastor can't think of what to use, his mind drawing a blank - he's too distressed watching his ichor trickle out. He ends up ripping off a piece of his own overcoat, the material bright red, and he wraps it a few times around the laceration.

"This will have to do." Alastor says impatiently. "Where else are you hurt?"

He grabs Lucifer's chin and moves it this way and that, trying to see if there are any further cuts. As he's inspecting him, Alastor notes that Lucifer's eyes are pure scarlet, his sharp horns in full display; it throws him back to the masquerade ball, where they acknowledged their friendship for the first time.

"That's it, okay?! And plus, I can heal it!" Lucifer's tail tightens around his wrist. "Why're you here, anyway?"

Of course.

Lucifer had the ability to heal.

That fact had completely slipped out of Alastor's mind, and it's absurd how he threw reason out the window at the sight of his wound. Still, after he's certain Lucifer isn't injured anywhere else, the death grip around his heart lessens. Alastor lets go of his face to point at the cat-like creature.

"That thing informs me when there is something of concern. So? What else occurred?"

"Uh. Nothing, really. I mean, I guess Lyre was trying to do something, but look at them now."

Alastor does turn around, and he spots Niffty on Lute's shoulder, swinging her legs happily. "Niffty, my dear! We have been searching everywhere for you."

"Alastor!" Niffty waves at him excitedly. "Let's go to an amusement park!"

"So you demand something the moment we reunite. How lovely." Alastor looks at the shadow creature, who is ambling around Lucifer. "And you."

"Me?" Lucifer blinks.

"Not you. *You."* Alastor points at his shadow minion. "You were being needlessly dramatic. Why were you yelling in my head so ceaselessly?"

The cat-like shadow titters, like its making fun of Alastor somehow, and he squints at it.

"Well, look! We got Niffty!" Lucifer says quickly. "Mission accomplished! Let's grab Charlie and get the hell out of here."

He glances down at Lucifer's tail, which is coiling around Alastor's left hand and snaking down his wrist. It's a reassuring pressure, and he grabs the pointed tip, forcefully dragging Lucifer closer to him.

“You dimwitted fool.” Alastor seethes. “How you have survived for this long is beyond me.”

Lucifer bristles at this, clearly offended.

“Oh, I’M the fool? YOU’RE the one who ran over here! She has an angelic weapon, dumbass!”

“So a little angel can hurt you. What a disgrace for the King of Hell!”

“Uh, it’s barely a scratch!”

“The blood dripping down your arm says otherwise, hmm?”

“Okay, *you’ve* done worse things to me.” Lucifer grumbles. “You literally tried to kill me at your radio tower.”

“Oh? I thought I wasn’t a threat to you?”

“You aren’t, except for being a threat to my *sanity!”*

They glare at each other, and Alastor feels a jumble of emotions crushed up inside of him - irritation at his biting words, relief that he’s acting like a buffoon, as per usual - and he grabs ahold of Lucifer’s cheek, and tugs it, *hard* -

“OW OW OW!” Lucifer tries to slap his hand off, but Alastor pulls at it even harder. “This - hurts - WAY more than the cut!”

“Is that all it takes to render you immobile? How embarrassing for you!”

“You *moron!”* Lucifer growls, and he puts both of his hands on Alastor’s cheeks. Before he can even register what’s happening, Lucifer yanks them on either side, and now they’re both pulling each other’s faces.

“Let. Go.”

“Only if you let go first.”

Alastor hisses, and he lunges at Lucifer instead - they start rolling on the ground, Lucifer’s tail still entwined around his wrist - he shoves Alastor’s face - he elbows Lucifer - it’s punch after punch after punch and -

“What the hell is this?” Lute’s voice cuts through their fight, and they stop their skirmish to look at her. She sighs, exasperated, and she removes Niffty from her shoulder with one hand. “I’m leaving.”

“Okay. I’ll miss you!” Niffty says. Lute tosses her onto the ground before she sends her a withering glare.

“You know what? Let’s never meet again.”

And with a flap of her wings, Lute disappears off into the distance.

They sit up on the ground after she leaves, and Alastor glances over at Lucifer's injury again. Although his hand is still wrapped up in the red cloth of Alastor's coat, the makeshift bandage is starting to come undone.

This time,

without even asking,

Alastor grabs onto his hand.

Lucifer's eyes widen at this, but he merely watches Alastor as he readjusts the cloth. He's aware that this is all unnecessary. Realizes that Lucifer can heal it in the blink of an eye.

Regardless.

Alastor doesn't like knowing that he's been cut, and so he double-knots it, making sure that it's secure.

When he's done, he can't bring himself to release his hold. He guides Lucifer's hand up to his eyes instead, and his ashen fingers, curiously enough, still lack his wedding ring.

"Did you permanently set your ring aside?" Alastor asks. "How very interesting. You really haven't worn it since we performed at Mimzy's club."

"Yeah." Lucifer says.

And he gazes right at Alastor when he says the next part.

"I don't need it anymore."

Lucifer is a mess.

His hair is absolutely tousled. His shirt is coming undone. He's sitting in his full demon form, and he's red everywhere, wings-eyes-horns-tail, the colour so brilliant that Alastor can't look away.

It's why he notices the dirt that's smudged on Lucifer's face, right over the pink blush mark on his cheek.

"You are in quite an awful state."

Lucifer scoffs at this. "Fine, I'll bite. Is it my hair? My clothes? What?"

"There is a little… something… here." Alastor points at his own cheek, indicating the right area.

"What? Here?" Lucifer mirrors him instead, rubbing at the left side of his face.

"No,"

and Alastor moves forward instinctively,

"here,"

his hand cups Lucifer's face, holding on for a second too long. Lucifer stares at him, watching as Alastor wipes the dirt away carefully with his fingertips, touch as gentle as a breeze.

When he's done, he retracts his arm, and Lucifer touches his own cheek gingerly. After a moment, he has a lopsided grin tugging at his lips, his tail swishing in the air contentedly.

"How do I look now?"

Stunning, Alastor thinks.

Alastor is a mess.

Lucifer relishes the moments when he's ruffled, because Alastor is normally extremely put-together. His clothes are ripped. One of his buttons is missing. His hair is wild, with a crumpled flower sticking onto his smooth strands; it sways in the wind in a rather bewitching manner.

“I don’t know where you get off on saying I look bad, when you don’t look any better.” Lucifer teases, and Alastor stiffens up at the remark.

“Lying now, are we?”

“I’m not! See?” Lucifer leans over and plucks the flower out of his hair. It’s pretty - red, tipped with white ends. “You had a little passenger on you.”

“A what now?”

“This.”

He drops it into Alastor’s hands, and he looks down at it curiously.

“Hmm.” Alastor brushes the petals of the flower, smoothing it out. “It has the same colours as your wings.”

The longer Alastor stares at the flower, the more relaxed he seems, and his smile softens. It reaches his eyes, warm and crinkling, and the scene shoots an arrow right through his heart.

Adorable, Lucifer thinks.

The stars align,

the cosmos shift,

and Alastor and Lucifer reach the same conclusion:

Fffffffuuuuuuuuck.

I like him.

Chapter End Notes

I'M BACK BAYBEEEE!!! 100,000 words later and they realize they like each other what the fuck. I'm so sorry LMAO I have no idea how you stuck around to read this slow-ass fic, but I am super grateful! This concludes Act 3: Heaven (Niffty Arc) / Feelings Realization, ch. 13 - 20.

FAQ:
- I'm not sure about the chapter count, but rest assured we still have a long way to go. The muses in my head refuse to be silenced, so you won't be getting rid of me for a while 😈
- I don't have a playlist for this fic, but if you'd like to make one on Spotify/YouTube and send it to me, I'd be happy to link it!
- I will not be upping the rating - no E stuff here, but I'll keep doing romance + suggestive content, like usual.

Fun Facts:
- Who fell first? I've always portrayed them as equals. Their deals are equivalent, their compliments are of the same value, the push-and-the-pull have been consistent, so I made them fall for each other at the same time because I CAN 😤
- Alastor refused to kneel in ch. 11 but he kneels now
- The 'considerate' compliment is from ch. 16
- Those shadow minions were present in ch. 3, ch. 12, ch. 18 (briefly) and now here! Lucifer has increasing fondness for them.
- Lucifer removed his wedding ring in ch. 8
- Alastor doesn't forget anything that people say (from ch. 3)
- Alastor touched his cheek, like in ch. 17
- Alastor's radio dials ticking are from ch. 1 and ch. 6
- The last time Lucifer was in full demon mode was in ch. 11

I am back to my regular posting schedule - see you next Friday! Leave theories/suggestions in comments below.

The Research

Chapter Notes

CH. 21 FANART:
- comic by @Sophyret1
- drawn by @dirtgrubber
- drawn by @mintysuniverse
- drawn by @elkaseltzer
- drawn by @poing-boing
- drawn by @grijannax
- drawn by @marziesolar
- drawn by @of-spaceships-and-cats
- drawn by: @bobadila
- I wanted to share this OSAS meme and cute tweet!

THANK YOU! Send me fanart via Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Don't fucking panic. The least helpful thing right now is to panic.

It's just.

How is it possible that after Lucifer finally forges a new friendship, the first one in many years, he ends up liking his friend waaaaayyyy more than he should? It's like he *wants* to be stressed. Does he secretly have a masochistic streak inside of him, or something?

Lucifer runs a hand through his hair before looking down at Niffty, who is twirling around without a care.

"Alright then." He manages to say. "Let's go to Charlie and leave before anything else happens."

Alastor also glances down at her. "It would be far too suspicious to return with Niffty in tow. How do you propose we hide her?"

Right. Niffty is tiny, but not so tiny that she can run around without notice. Lucifer puts his hand on his chin, deep in thought, and then a lightbulb goes over his head.

Huh. Maybe she'll fit…

He takes his hat off. "Hey Niffty. Why don't you get on my head?"

“Got it!” She crawls up his body, and then crosses her legs on his head. “Now what, sir?”

“Check this out.” Lucifer grows his hat exponentially in size, and once it’s about three times as big as it used to be, he puts it on top of his head - drops it over Niffty - and it conceals her completely.

Unfortunately, it also comes at the cost of him looking stupid while wearing The Largest Hat In The World. It’s so massive that it’s a little heavy, actually, and Alastor stares at him like he’s an absolute moron.

“That,” his eyes keep drifting up to his hat, “is the most dreadful disguise I have ever laid eyes on.”

“What do you suggest, then?!” Lucifer says hotly. Alastor is silent for a moment, and then -

he covers his mouth, a muffled chuckle slipping out.

“If I thought your hat was preposterous before, it definitely looks *worse* now!” Alastor’s body shakes, like he’s fighting to hold back his laugh.

“Uh, it hides her perfectly!”

“I have never seen someone wear a hat that is this - ” he puts a hand on his radio cane for support, trying to speak - “this - ”

and he can’t hide his deranged laugh at this point, tossing his head back to cackle loudly. It’s piercing; shrill; he’s laughing at Lucifer’s expense, but it’s so contagious that he ends up snickering as well.

“What’s so funny?” Niffty asks. Her voice sounds stifled under the hat. “Tell me!”

“Oh, nothing to worry your twisted little mind about, Niffty.” Alastor calms down, looking composed as usual, but his eyes dance with amusement. “Very well. Let’s do this for now.”

“Wow. Not like *you* had a better idea, anyway.”

“Oh, I certainly can’t top this sophisticated plan of yours.” He mocks, and Lucifer rolls his eyes.

Alastor is still a massive pain in the ass. He gets on his nerves like no one else ever has, teasing and taunting and jeering, but all of that is - it’s so - it’s just part of who Alastor is, part of what makes him, *him,* and it’s all deathly addictive.

This SUCKS. He lets out a sigh, and Alastor watches him curiously while he adjusts his top hat (even though no angle could possibly make it look good).

“So where are they?”

Alastor points to a gold and white building in the distance. “They hosted the meeting in there. I would presume that they are still arguing in that room.”

Despite all the emotional issues he's dealing with, Lucifer still has the urge to compete with Alastor. He flashes him a devious smile.

"Race you there!"

Alastor's eyes gleam with interest.

"But of course. And the prize?"

"The usual?"

"Hmm. Acceptable."

And they bolt off, Lucifer flying, Alastor using his tentacles to take leaping steps. When he looks back, Alastor has grown into a colossal size again, his full demon form at odds with the serene backdrop of Heaven. Truthfully, it's rather captivating, and Lucifer has to wrench his eyes away or he'll gawk at him for the rest of the journey.

He uses this time to sort through his internal chaos (RE: liking-Alastor-a-little-too-much). It's one of the worst mistakes he's made so far - only has himself to blame for getting attached - and it's all terrible.

Terrible because Alastor is the first connection he's made in so long, terrible because he really, truly cares for him, terrible because if this disgusts Alastor and he exits out of his life, Lucifer will never recover from the hurt.

Shit. Why did this have to happen? He groans internally.

"You are quite slow today." Alastor jumps right by him. His antlers are spread out in skeletal, eerie shapes, and his smile is so large it looks maniacal.

But Lucifer still finds him attractive. What the hell?

"I know how to pace myself! You know, you'll run outta stamina at that rate."

"Or perhaps that's just an excuse for you to dawdle around, hmm?"

"Oh, I'm just giving you time to catch up." Lucifer smirks, and he pumps his wings harder, pulling ahead in an instant. He can hear Alastor's snarl; it fills him with short-lived satisfaction until he remembers the whole romance problem, and his glee plummets to unease.

Exactly *how* greedy is he allowed to be?

They're already friends - and the thing is, being a couple comes with a whole bunch of other commitments. The two relationships often go hand-in-hand, but he has absolutely no idea if Alastor wanted to do any of that… stuff. Non-platonic stuff.

Okay, well. What about the best case scenario? Lucifer thinks.

He entertains the notion for a second, a parallel universe where they're going out. Tries to imagine him and Alastor doing couple-y things, like whispering sweet nothings; cuddling; kissing; making out -

and he almost smacks right into a tree.

"You should really pay attention." Alastor sings as he passes him.

"Fuck off." Lucifer snaps, and he flaps his wings harder, overtaking him again. When he's certain that Alastor is behind him, Lucifer considers the biggest issue of all:

Alastor has never once referenced a past relationship.

So.

Is this something that he's even interested in? Alastor has always been closed-off with others, and Lucifer spent so much time forging this friendship that he doesn't want to make a misstep.

He needs more time to think about it.

He's the first to arrive at the heavenly building. Instead of going inside, he sits on the gold windowsill, watching as Alastor makes his way over at a breakneck speed. His neck is starting to hurt from carrying Niffty on his head, and he pats his hat to get her attention.

"Niffty, I'm gonna put you on the floor for now." Lucifer whispers, voice lowered so as not to draw attention from the guards.

"O-kay!"

She's clinging onto his hat as he takes it off, dropping her down onto the ground. Alastor approaches during this time, and his eyes slowly revert back from his radio dials.

"So you've won." He sounds irked. "I suppose the score is now 2 - 2."

"HAH! Loser." Lucifer grins. "What should I make you do this time? Eat a pancake? A waffle? Cake, maybe?"

Alastor makes a face. "Do you only have sugar on your mind? It's no wonder your blood tastes sickeningly sweet."

"I still can't believe you don't like sweet things." Lucifer shakes his head. "What about caramel apples?"

"No."

"Cotton candy?"

"Revolting."

“Chocolate?”

“I’d rather not.”

“Cookies?”

“Ha-ha-HA! You can list as many saccharine desserts as you’d like, but my answer will remain the same.”

In one smooth motion, Alastor perches on the windowsill beside him. His legs are so long that his feet touches the ground, whereas Lucifer’s legs dangle in the air instead.

He peeks at Alastor from the corner of his eye. They both have their hands gripping the edge of the window frame, and there’s a minuscule distance between them - almost negligible, really. Small enough that if their fingers touched, Lucifer can pass it off as an accident.

So he moves…

just…

a little bit…

and his pinky finger bumps against his.

Alastor glances down, and for a terrifying second, Lucifer thinks that he’s going to yank his hand back.

But he merely looks away, keeping his hand in the same position, and their little fingers maintain that singular point of contact. It fills him with a flutter of warmth again, and Lucifer has to face forward to prevent his face from heating up.

The sun has mostly dipped down the horizon at this point, transitioning to twilight. Blue stars dot the skies, and there’s a sliver of a pale moon, so tiny he can scarcely see it.

Lucifer turns around to face him. “Y’know, we’re looking at the moon again.”

“So we are.” Alastor stares at the moon, unblinking. “Unfortunately, the moon here is not red. How disappointing.”

Lucifer finds himself agreeing. He wouldn’t have, before. He used to prefer the muted shades of Heaven. “Yeah, I kinda miss it. I really don’t like being here. It reminds me too much of the, uh.”

Lucifer trails off, and Alastor slowly looks at him.

“The what?” He prompts. Lucifer sighs, and scratches his head.

“My… fall.”

Alastor doesn't respond at first, and they gaze at the moon quietly. He regrets bringing it up now; thinking about his past only bums him out. He's about to change the topic when Alastor leans down, his expression serious.

"Under Heaven's shiny exterior, it is rather rotten, isn't it?"

"Y - " Lucifer clears his throat. "Yeah."

God, they're sitting so close to each other. Alastor has always had blatant disregard for other people's personal space, but Lucifer feels a little shy by the proximity now.

"The Hell in which you have created is quite chaotic." He continues. "But I have always worked best in pandemonium!"

"Of course *you* would." Lucifer runs a hand through his hair. "But I definitely messed up. Giving free will to people? Causing all that violence and mayhem?"

He says the next part quietly.

"And now everything bad that happens in Hell is my fault."

Alastor studies him, his smile subdued. Lucifer doesn't know what he's expecting him to say, but it certainly isn't *this:*

"Aren't you conceited."

"Hey!" He scowls. "What gives?"

"Whatever a soul chooses to do is up to them. They are in charge of their own destiny, after all! Your responsibility only extends so far. So, no. Not *everything* is your fault."

And then Alastor's eyes twinkle. "Only *some* things!"

"Thanks a lot, jackass." Lucifer groans at this, but, strangely enough, he does feel marginally better. Admittedly, Alastor was right. Not that he would tell him that, of course.

"You should know that there is no shadow without light."

Alastor conjures up a ball of light to demonstrate. It looks like he's holding stars in his hands, an infinite galaxy that leaves long shadows in his palms. It's quite pretty, actually, and Lucifer almost reaches over to touch it.

"Plus, I like being in Hell!" Niffty chimes in. She's still sitting on the ground, but she's trying to crawl out from underneath Lucifer's hat. Alastor uses his radio cane to push her back into her hiding spot.

"Niffty, if you would like to stay in one piece, you will have to keep quiet."

"Yes, sir!"

Alastor slips off the window frame to stand in front of Lucifer. The sky washes him in pale azure, and he's moonlit by the celestial stars above.

"Come now." He gestures with his head. "I'm sure they are all dying to see our presence."

"Fine, fine. Wait up."

Lucifer looks down from his spot on the windowsill, only to realize there's quite a distance between him and the ground. It's too tall to just hop off, but also too short to justify the effort of flying. He's still thinking about it when Alastor steps closer, and there's a smug smile tugging on his lips.

"Are you having difficulty reaching the floor?"

It's true, but Lucifer stiffens up at the comment. "Uh, I don't *need* to. I can jump."

"And risk getting hurt again? You are quite prone to injury, aren't you?"

Alastor looks like he's deliberating over something, and he brings his hand back to his head. It's only for a brief moment - he removes his hand immediately - but he looks like he's come to some sort of a decision.

"Since you are so incapable by yourself - "

"HEY!"

"I will assist."

Alastor steps closer, his shoes clicking on the pavement. He's not sure what he means by 'assist' (is he going to materialize a staircase for him, or something?), but then his hands reach out,

and his long red fingers settle around Lucifer's waist.

Alastor's hands completely wrap around his torso. The place where he touches is hot - burning hot - scalding, really - and he can't stop himself from jolting at the contact. Lucifer can feel his grip tightening on his waist, a pleasant pressure, and he looks at him questioningly.

"What are you - "

And Alastor lifts him up in the air.

It happens so fast that he doesn't even register it at first, not until Lucifer gazes down and their eyes meet, gold into red, mirroring each other with the same expression of surprise. He feels weightless; heart pounding; cheeks flaming; it's all so embarrassing that his words come out in a rapid-fire string.

"CANYOUPUTMEDOWN?"

“You are light as a feather.” Alastor seems a little awed by the fact, but he does set him back onto the floor. Lucifer huffs, feeling chagrined by the comment.

“Yeah, okay, I’m short. You gotta come up with a new insult.”

“It is not - ”

Alastor’s eyes dart away, and he has a pensive look on his face.

“It is not a bad thing.”

And Lucifer doesn’t know what to say to that, because now he’s trying to stop his face from flushing, and he forces himself to look elsewhere. He grabs his hat instead, making sure that Niffty is still securely tucked underneath, and they make their way over to the meeting room in silence.

“Dad!” Charlie’s eyes go straight to Lucifer’s outrageously oversized hat. “Woah. That hat is quite a… statement.”

“Thanks, sweetie. C’mon, let’s go. Now!”

Lucifer gestures frantically to the door, trying to somehow mime out: *we got Niffty! Let’s run before they realize!* Thankfully, Charlie seems to understand, and she gives a quick wave to Emily and Sera.

“Thank you sooo much for meeting us today! Heaven is beautiful, as always. Emily, can you make us a portal to go down?”

Sera looks at her suspiciously. “Is that all, daughter of the Morningstar? When you set up this meeting, I had thought you wanted to share everyone’s perspective with us.”

She then casts a sweeping look at Alastor. “Like that sinner, for example.”

At the word *sinner,* Charlie stiffens up.

“His name is ALASTOR!” She says fiercely. “He has a name, you know!”

The atmosphere is taut after her outburst, and Charlie takes in a deep breath.

“Sera, I completely understand that you want to keep Heaven safe. But I have a duty to protect Hell. I was born and raised there, and I’m going to do my best with my people. If you’re not willing to help, you don’t have to. But you’ll be sorry if you come down and mess with my citizens again.”

It’s the closest she’s ever come to making a threat. She lifts her head up, looking intrigued by Charlie’s fighting words, like she’s seeing her with newfound respect. When Sera speaks, her voice softens by just a fraction.

“I know how you feel, princess. We do what we can for our respective realms.” There’s a sympathetic smile on her face. “Perhaps we will see eye-to-eye one day.”

Charlie deflates at this, the tension evaporating from her shoulders. She’s never been able to stay angry for long, and she has an unsure smile on her face.

“I…I hope so, Sera. I really hope so.”

Sera nods, and then turns to look at Alastor.

“And, Alastor. I was curious about your own feelings regarding Hell. But we can have that conversation some other time.” She gestures towards Emily. “Please make the portal for them.”

Emily seems relieved, and she flies down in front of them. “Right, of course! Charlie, always so good to see you. If you need anything, call me anytime, okay? And that goes for all of you!”

“Aw. Thank you, Emily!” After Charlie gives her a quick hug, Emily waves a hand to form a large, golden portal. On the other side is the entrance to the Hazbin Hotel, and Lucifer has never been so relieved to see Hell in his life.

“Hold on.”

Sera’s voice echoes in the chamber, and it makes all of them freeze in place.

“Lucifer. Can you come here for a second?”

Shit. Did she see through them? Lucifer walks over slowly, trying to buy some time, and she gets up from her seat. When standing, Sera is almost twice his height, and she looms over him menacingly.

“Yeah?” Lucifer asks, heart pounding. Sera leans down, and her eyes zero in on his hat, examining it carefully.

Fuck. He starts to sweat. *She knows, doesn’t she?*

Sera opens her mouth -

“Was your hat always this size?”

Lucifer blinks, thrown off-balance by the question. It’s definitely not what he expected her to say, but he’ll take it.

“It’s a new look.” He laughs awkwardly, trying to sound casual. “Whaddya think about it?”

Sera stares at it, bemused. “Since you’re asking for my opinion, I do find it to be… a little too big.”

“O-KAY! Got it!” Lucifer starts to walk back, and then changes his mind, turning around at the last second. “So, um. See you later?”

He doesn’t expect Sera to agree. The last time they met was tense - uncomfortable - overall, just *bad.* But this time, she has a whisper of a smile on her face.

“Yes. We will meet again. It is… nice to see you in good spirits, Lucifer.”

And she sounds genuine.

After the meeting, Emily is flying in the sky when she locates Lute, who is sitting with her knees pulled to her chest. She carefully lands down, and Lute doesn’t even lift her head up when Emily walks over.

“Lute?” She says gently. “Are you feeling alright?”

When Sera had mentioned that Lute went down to Hell, she had a hunch that something must have happened with the Hazbin Hotel. She kept an eye out, trying to see if Charlie and Lucifer needed to confront Lute for any reason, but they had simply came and went.

Lute doesn’t respond, and Emily tries again.

“Lute…”

“I’m just fine, your highness.” Lute stares off into the night sky. Although it’s evening, Heaven is exquisitely bright, dotted with a million shiny little stars. “At least, I will be.”

“Niffty!” Angel Dust throws all six of his arms around her. “What the hell, you little freak! Ya had us worried!”

“It was fun.” Niffty giggles. “I wanna do that again!”

“Only you would find being kidnapped fun, Niff.” Husk says gruffly, but he pats her head anyway. They’re all standing in the parlour, and Charlie smiles at the sight, pleased that her hotel family is all together again.

“Niffty, I didn’t even get to ask! What did you do in Heaven?” Charlie looks down at her. “I mean, besides getting a new outfit. Which looks *so* cute, by the way!”

“I stole.”

“Niffty!” Charlie admonishes. “Is that where you got your dress?”

“Yeah!” Niffty does a spin. “I got all kinds of cake up there, too!”

“So ya got a new outfit and some food. Maybe I should get kidnapped next time.” Angel Dust leans in to check out her holographic wings, which fade away by the second.

“I don’t think you’ll like it.” Niffty says. “Everyone was way too nice. And they had no bugs! Or an amusement park.”

After a second, she starts jumping up and down in place. “Oooooh! Let’s go to an amusement park!”

“Oh my god!” Charlie lights up at the idea. “Dad, didn’t you used to have one? We used to go when I was younger, with, um…”

She trails off before she can say *mom,* but Lucifer seems to fill in the blanks anyway, and he smiles a little sadly at the memory.

“Oh, yeah. Lu Lu World, right?” His chuckle sounds forced. “I can’t believe you remembered, Charlie.”

“Of course I do!” She sort of regrets phrasing it that way - not when her dad is in a new relationship - and she tries to pivot the conversation. “Okay, sooooo, Niffty, how does that sound? Wanna go to Lu Lu World? I think it’ll make for a great team-bonding trip!”

Niffty nods eagerly. “Hehe! Let’s go!”

“An amusement park, huh?” Angel Dust has a devious glint in his eyes. “Mind if I invite Rosie with us?”

“You and Rosie have become alarmingly good friends in such a short period of time.” Alastor looks peeved. “But I suppose she would enjoy that.”

“What else happened up in Heaven?” Angel Dust asks. He glimpses over at Alastor and Lucifer before looking back at Charlie. “It was gettin’ kinda boring here.”

Charlie lets out a deep sigh. “Sera was, um. Not… into our ideas? But Alastor kind of talked me through it, and I’m going to keep helping souls by making Hell a better place for everyone.”

“You wanna make *Hell* better?” Husk says incredulously. “You know it’s called Hell for a reason, right?”

“But Hell doesn’t have to be so… hellish? I’ll help out new souls, and people who have any issues! They can treat our hotel as a pit-stop. I don’t want to force them to stay here, and I also want people who really care about self-improvement.”

“That sounds like a slim audience, Charlie.” Angel Dust says slowly.

“I mean, newcomers are always having a hard time adjusting!” Charlie argues. “I want them to know that we can protect them. Otherwise, they get forced into contracts,” Husk and Angel Dust deliberately look away, “or they get killed.”

“They certainly do.” Alastor says cheerfully. “I’ve devoured my fair share of souls, so I would know, ha-ha!”

“See? That’s how overlords get into power!” Charlie gestures at him. “Although, Alastor, please don’t eat the souls who come here.”

“No promises!”

Vaggie glares at him, but Alastor looks unaffected.

“Soooooo, I was thinking, since the TV commercial didn’t work - ”

“Well, television *is* the inferior medium.” Alastor pipes in.

“The masquerade ball was ruined - ”

“That’s what happens when fuckin’ Val appears.” Angel Dust grumbles.

“And Katie Killjoy *really* hated me on her news broadcast - ”

“The singing probably didn’t help, Charlie.” Vaggie says, not unkindly.

“I’m gonna have to do this the old-fashioned way.” Charlie clenches her fist determinedly. “I’ll make pamphlets, and fliers, and hand them out at the amusement park.”

“You’re gonna *work* when we’re at the park?” Angel Dust says in disbelief. “You can take a day off, Charlie. Those assholes will still be out there, waiting for you to save ‘em.”

“I’ll do both! No big deal, right?”

“Charlie, let me help.” Vaggie insists, and Charlie looks at her gratefully.

“I super appreciate it, Vaggie! Ok, I’ll plan this out for us, and we can all go in a few days.”

As they’re about to disperse, Charlie claps her hands together to get their attention. “Actually - dad, Alastor, Vaggie. Can you meet me in the music room?”

Alastor and Lucifer look at each other in confusion.

And Angel Dust subtly elbows Husk.

“Oh, my dearest Al.” Lucifer looks at Alastor dreamily. “Why don’t you kiss me right now?”

“Of course, my lovely Lulu.” Alastor leans down to kiss him on his forehead. “Now, it is your turn to kiss me.”

Lucifer flies up and loops his arms around Alastor’s neck. “Nothing would make me happier, my sweet baby deer - ”

Charlie impatiently waves her imagination away, a little disturbed by what her brain is capable of coming up with. They’re all huddled in the music room, and she has to steady herself before speaking.

“So, dad… Alastor…”

Alastor and Lucifer stare at her expectantly.

“The angels told us that you two were having public… um…”

God, Charlie can’t even say it. She kind of wishes that she were as brazen as Angel Dust, who probably would have wiggled his eyebrows and made some sort of lewd hand gesture. She looks over at Vaggie helplessly, and she steps in.

“They said you two were fucking. Is that true?” Vaggie says bluntly. Alastor and Lucifer freeze at this, and then they glance at each other. “Oh god. IT’S TRUE?”

“NO!” Lucifer says hurriedly. “No no no no no. *No.* We just needed a diversion. I don’t know why they thought we were, uh… no. We didn’t do much, but whatever we did was really, REALLY effective.”

“They ran away immediately.” Alastor adds. “So we kept at it.”

“So, wait.” Charlie pauses. It’s… not what she expected. Not at all. “You’re not together?”

The both nod at this.

“Oooooooh. Dad. You and Alastor! Wow. You’re… just friends?”

“Yep.”

“Nothing else?”

“We aren’t enemies. Don’t worry, Charlie.” Lucifer totally misinterprets her, and she racks her brain to think of a better way to articulate her thoughts.

“But I mean… you can tell me anything, okay? Like, seriously. A-ny-thing.”

“Okay!” Lucifer beams. Alastor leans on his radio staff, looking less and less interested in the conversation.

“Is that all?” Alastor asks. “Or did you require something else?”

“No, that’s - that’s it. Thanks for all your hard work!” Charlie smiles uncomfortably, unsure how to feel. The situation had been a roller-coaster ride from start to finish. Learning that,

A) Her dad didn’t tell her that he was dating someone
B) And that someone was Alastor
C) And they were having sex in public
D) And just kidding! All of that was a ruse

was hard to wrap her head around. Having Alastor as a dad would have been… kind of *weird,* but she had already accepted the possibility of having him as her new, official father.

But now that he isn’t, she feels, for some inexplicable reason…

disappointed?

“I hate you.” Husk whispers. “I hate you for bringing me here.”

“Team H.A.R.D does everythin’ together!” Angel Dust whispers back. They’re squeezed against each other in the vents above the music room, eavesdropping on the conversation. It’s an incredibly tight fit with the two of them, and Angel Dust can barely breathe at this point.

“Yes, Husk.” Rosie is on his phone - he had put her on video dial so that she could see everything. *“We certainly do.”*

“What the fuck? You video called Rosie! Just do that for me next time.” Husk grumbles. “I told you that you’re too big! You’re not gonna fit!”

“Oh *yeah,* whiskers. Talk dirty to me.” Angel Dust drawls suggestively, and Husk smiles with some exasperation.

“Right. I walked into that one.”

There’s a skittering sound behind them, and Angel Dust looks back, a bit fearful that it was Alastor’s shadow creatures or something -

only to find out that it’s just Niffty. She’s switched back into her usual clothes, and she looks at them curiously.

“What are you two doing?” She crawls in-between them, and peers through the gaps of the vents. Angel Dust hesitates on telling her; the last time he enlisted Niffty to spy was for the radio show, and it had been a complete disaster.

“Uh. We’re just checkin’ for bugs.”

“Ooh!” Niffty says brightly. She opens her hands, revealing a ton of crushed up insects in her palms. “I’ve killed a bunch already!”

“GROSS!” Angel Dust recoils so hard he hits his head - “OW!” - the collision causes the vents to shudder - crack - break until they all fall down, tumbling out in an heap, and everyone turns to look at them.

“What the fuck are you doing?” Vaggie yells, outraged. “Look at this mess! There’s dust everywhere now!”

“Just your standard inspection.” Angel Dust grits through his teeth. “And if ya want my opinion, you should probably call someone to fix the vents.”

Alastor stares at his bookcase.

Specifically: at a single shelf, which contains two items only.

1. Lucifer’s feather
2. And the rubber ducks he had given him

He feels a brief flicker of mortification at the sight. If he collects any more, his bookshelf will morph into a fully-fledged Lucifer Ledge.

Alastor picks up the feather, and upon thinking about him, his head starts to hurt again. It’s almost like clockwork at this point, the perpetual thumping in his mind, and it’s quite obvious that he needs to stop overthinking lest his head starts to fry.

And of course,

the cause and the cure for this headache was Lucifer himself. Such *irony.*

“You stir up trouble even when you are not here.” Alastor mutters to the feather. He sets it back down, and he rests his hand on his forehead. It doesn’t do much to soothe him.

It had been a few days since they returned from Heaven, and he had elected to retire to his room, trying to make sense of his emotions. All of that had been in vain, unfortunately, and Alastor flicks on the radio to distract himself.

The station plays a terrible song, and he switches through the channels quickly. None of them are quite right (too fast, too rowdy, too much),

until a gentle voice sings out,

♫ *Why do stars fall down from the sky, every time you walk by?*

Just like me, they long to be…

close to you ♩

He snaps his head up when he hears it. It's exceedingly sentimental, which Alastor detests. But the lyrics do resonate, somewhat, reminding him a bit about ~~Lucifer's smile~~

~~Lucifer's laugh~~

~~Lucifer -~~

𝄞 On the day that you were born the angels got together…

They sprinkled moon dust in your hair of gold

and starlight in your eyes - ♬

He slaps the radio so hard it cracks under his hand.

"How appalling." Alastor looks at the broken radio, and he growls at himself, annoyed - vexed - none of this was supposed to be happen, but he can't ignore it any longer.

This awful longing must be…

infatuation.

Alastor places his head on the ledge, exasperated.

It appears that I have made a grave error, he thinks. *I should have simply ignored him. And now, I'm left with this… these…*

He doesn't want to say it. For a number of reasons. But one of them makes his skin crawl like no other.

He.

Doesn't.

Have.

Any.

Experience.

With.

Romance.

All of this is new and foreign to him, and he loathes it. To not understand something? To lose control of himself in such a way? He would rather die all over again than deal with any of it. Not that he has a choice in the matter, really.

“As I have identified the issue…” Alastor sighs out, “what shall I do next?”

The easiest path forward would be to consult with Rosie, but even he has qualms bringing up something so ~~embarrassing~~ *vulnerable* with her. Still though - he requires a frame of reference.

How does one learn about things in secret? Alastor ponders. And then brightens, summoning up his shadow demons. They await his order patiently, and he struggles with phrasing his command.

“Go out there and find me some books.”

They wait for him to elaborate.

“Self-help books.” It’s hard to admit, even to his own shadow creatures. “Look for topics on… affection. Devotion. Partnership, and all that. Exercise discretion, and steal them without anyone noticing.”

They seem confused, and Alastor has to grit the sentence out of his teeth, his voice harsh and lowered.

“I-am-speaking-about-ROMANCE!”

They cower at his tone, but they mostly seem perplexed. Alastor waves an impatient hand at them, and they leave without further questions.

They come back with quite the harvest, and the minions stack the books on top of each other. It’s so tall that it resembles a tower, and Alastor reaches for the one on top -

before he lurches back at the title:

BOLD, BRAWNY, AND BOOTYLICIOUS.

His initial reaction is to burn it.

However.

Best not to judge a book by its cover, as they say. He gingerly flips through the novel, and reads a passage at random:

He pushed his hot little body onto the bed. His tight shorts clung to that fat ass and juicy thighs, and he had a sexy grin -

Alastor slams the book shut.

“Who. Brought. This?” He demands, the shadow creatures cowering at his feet. He had never once wanted to read an erotica; he’s obviously familiar with the concept of sex, but it had never been something he pursued.

“This,” Alastor is so furious that his shadow starts growing, “is attacking both my eyes and my taste. And perhaps the most egregious offence is how poorly written it is. I am going to rip you to shreds - ”

Knock!

Someone bangs on his door, and it startles him so much he drops the book onto the ground. He hurriedly kicks it underneath his bed; as he makes his way over, he throws a blanket over the rest of the books, too frazzled to properly conceal them.

Must be Lucifer, Alastor thinks absentmindedly. When he swings the door open, he already has a snide remark prepared.

“A special visit from the king himself. What an honour - ”

And he stops talking.

Because, it’s - it’s not - it’s not Lucifer, it’s -

it’s Husk.

They stare at each other, and Alastor feels almost frozen from shock. The seconds of silence feel like a few hours, and he has to dig his claws into his palms to force himself to speak.

“Husker.” Alastor manages to say. “What do you want.”

“Uh.” Husk sounds about as awkward as he looks. “Niff just wanted to know if you’re coming to the amusement park.”

“I will be there. Is that all?” Alastor is already starting to close the door when Husk steps forward, his gaze suspicious.

“Did you… want to see Lucifer? Angel can grab him for you.”

Yes, Alastor thinks, and then he shakes his head, trying to maintain some guise of casualness. “There is no need!”

“You sure? ‘Cause it seemed like - ”

“Leave now if you would like to keep your head.”

Alastor bangs the door closed before Husk can respond. He needs a moment to recover from the past few minutes, which had somehow been even worse than suffering at the hands of Adam. After he calms down, he turns to look at the stack of books in the corner of his room, and he lets out an exhale.

“Well! I suppose I should get to work.”

He removes the blanket from the tower, steels himself for the ghastly task he has to undertake, and he picks up the next book.

Chapter End Notes

It’s been almost 4 months since I started writing this story! What a journey it has been. Thank you always for your support!

Fun Facts:
- The song that Alastor plays on the radio is called (They Long To Be) Close To You by Carpenters
- The moon, symbolizing Lucifer here, is small and waning in Heaven, but it’s large and red in Hell. Reference to ch. 14
- Also they have gazed at the moon in ch. 9, 10, 14
- Alastor cheers up Lucifer at the same spot he was talking to Charlie. Except, he was standing further away from Charlie, whereas he’s sitting with Lucifer (as close as possible lol)
- Of course the Lucifer Ledge mirrors the Alastor Altar!

See you next Friday! Leave theories/suggestions below <3

The Right Path

Chapter Notes

CH. 22 FANART:
- comic by @Sophyret1
- drawn by @radioducky / @Ninecloud_Se7en: 1 + 2
- drawn by @dirtgrubber: 1 + 2
- drawn by @scarletpineapple
- drawn by: @B0ogy_
- drawn by @myntesuniverse
- drawn by @artzstartist
- drawn by @grijannax: 1 + 2

Also OSAS memes!!! 1 + 2 + 3

Send me anything via Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Alastor spends the next few nights reading through the tower of books.

It turns out that his shadow beings had brought in mostly garbage works, ranging from novels to comics to *actual* self-help books. But there are a few pearls of wisdom within the pages, and he notes some similarities between their condition[1] and his.

([1] Developing ~~romantic affection.~~)

When he finishes the final book, he places it down onto the table and laces his fingers together in contemplation.

So he likes Lucifer.

And what about it?

Alastor stares into his fireplace, the green flames flickering in the air. He never would have expected this[2] to happen to him.

([2] See footnote number one.)

He had incorrectly assumed that he evolved beyond the need for intimacy. Although, being able to name this longing offered some relief, because he can now search for a solution.

Perhaps I should revisit my murdering plan from before, Alastor thinks. He scraps the idea immediately when he recalls Lute injuring Lucifer, and he lets out a harrumph.

No killing, unfortunately. And it would have solved his problem so easily, too.

“Cutting him out of my life is also not an option.” Alastor mutters. “I require something else. Something where I can be near him all the time. Something more than what we have… now…”

He trails off, his blood running cold, because he knows the answer - the only thing he can do, at this point, and that is -

I have to…

court him?

The prospect makes Alastor feel sick to his stomach. *Wooing* someone is not a pastime he’s ever dabbled in. He runs a finger down the spines of each book in the pile, trying to see if there was one he missed that could actually help him.

His hand hovers over a plain looking book, and he pulls it out. It provides some tips on the art of pursuit, but unfortunately, the content is about as helpful as the rest of his reading material.

- Make him laugh

He smiles tightly at the suggestion.

- Give him something he likes

Alastor rolls his eyes now.

- Look your best

And then he closes the book at this point. Such *obvious* advice. What, as opposed to looking your worst?

Still, Alastor reflects upon their time together. Lucifer had commented on his ponytail before. So, perhaps…

He conjures up a ribbon, ties his hair back carefully -

- before yanking his hair out of the ponytail, feeling rather unsettled by his actions. It’s as though he were having an out of body experience, doing things he wouldn’t do, fretting over things he wouldn’t care about, and he stares at his ribbon with some discomfort.

I have changed, he realizes with horror. *He has changed me.*

But he slowly pulls his hair back anyway.

DAUGHTER!
> dad, we're heading out to the park! can you get Al?

Lucifer
> On it!

Unlike his text message, Lucifer is not On it. In fact, he's a little worried about seeing Alastor.

They haven't met for the past few days - not exactly on purpose, but he had disappeared somewhere. He initially thought Alastor might have slinked away to host his radio show, but his station was absolutely silent.

In the meantime, Lucifer had spent his days designing and printing promotional fliers for the hotel. Partially because he wants to help his daughter out, but also partially as a distraction from Alastor, which was… pretty ineffective, to be honest.

He waves a hand to create a portal. On the other side is Alastor's door, and he takes a hesitant step forward.

"Okay, this is the first time you've seen each other in a while. You're cool. Be cool." Lucifer mumbles. Besides, he finally reached a resolution. It doesn't matter that he likes Alastor, because he's determined to keep things

C-A-S-U-A-L.

And with that, he lifts his hand up to knock on his door. Alastor cracks the door open; when they lock eyes, he pushes it slightly ajar, barely wide enough for him to slip out.

"Ah. So you've come." He shuts the door hurriedly, but Lucifer's eyes hone in on one thing and one thing only:

his hair, pulled into a ponytail. *Fuck, seriously? WHY?*

"Oh." Lucifer's voice comes out all strangled. "You - your hair."

Unfortunately, he's incapable of forming a more articulate sentence. Alastor tilts his head, but he seems strangely pleased by his reaction.

"Care to elaborate?"

Lucifer reaches a hand out, itching to touch his hair. “You look…”

So good, he thinks, *wait, don’t say that, don’t say that don’t say that -*

“SO GOOD.”

He blurts it out, louder than he wants to, and he has the impulse to beat the shit out of himself. “Oh, god. I - well.” His words are a mess, so he just ends it with a, “yeah, er, looks good,” followed with a weak thumbs-up.

He waits for Alastor to taunt him mercilessly, which he does:

“How *very* expressive. Have you considered dabbling in poetry?”

- but he covers his own face with his hand, and all Lucifer can see is the tiniest bit of pink sprinkled across his cheeks.

“Whatever. You get the point.” He grumbles. He has a hard time coming up with a clever riposte, so he settles for extremely unnatural small talk. “Hey, well... what’s new with you?”

“What is *new* with me?” Alastor echoes. He seems confused by the topic change, but he relents. “I suppose the only notable thing is that…”

He pauses - looks at Lucifer, before looking away immediately - and then lands on saying,

“My radio is broken. I will have to mend it sometime.”

“Oh.” Lucifer blinks. “How’d it happen?”

“Never mind all that.” His deer ears flatten, and Lucifer knows better than to press. Although, Alastor clearly loves the radio, so for it to be damaged…

“Be right back.”

Lucifer disappears into a portal without waiting for an answer, and he ends up back in his own room. He makes a beeline to his desk, which is covered in an assortment of Alastor’s items, and he rummages through them all to locate the shiny red radio.

“Ah-ha!” Lucifer picks it up, and he looks at the glossy surface thoughtfully. “There you are.”

Yeah, he had bought it because it reminded him of Alastor - always have, always will - but he doesn’t have much use for it, really. And besides, it felt fitting to give it to Alastor. Bestowing the object to the muse, as it were.

He returns with the radio in tow, and he pushes it into Alastor’s hands. “Here.”

“And what’s this?”

“It’s called a ra-di-o.” Lucifer drawls, and Alastor lets out a scoff.

“I am aware. What I am *asking* is, where did this come from?”

“I bought it.”

“Just now?”

Lucifer groans. “No, I - from a while back. Take it, alright? We gotta go to the park now.”

Alastor doesn’t make a move; he stares down at the radio, like he’s having trouble comprehending. “You had this lying around? For what purpose?”

Lucifer hadn’t prepared for being questioned so much, and he crosses his arms nervously. “You want it or not?”

“Yes.” Alastor says immediately. He sounds earnest, almost.

And then his tone shifts to its usual snarky nature. “To think that you would buy something so elegant! It appears my good taste has *finally* started rubbing off on you.”

“It was in the store for so long they made it 80% off! So actually, I’d say your taste is pretty awful.”

They argue back-and-forth while Lucifer conjures up a portal, and they step through it together.

Niffty stares at the amusement park sign with some shock.

“This isn’t Loo Loo Land!”

Lucifer scowls at her words. “Loo Loo Land is the KNOCKOFF! Lu Lu World came *first.* And besides, my park is waaaaaay better.”

They’re all standing inside the theme park, surrounded by roller coasters, aisles of merchandise shops, and mascots milling about. There’s a ferris wheel in the horizon, and a merry-go-round twirling around jovially.

It's a hot day, and Lucifer had left his hat and jacket at home. When he rolls his sleeves up, he doesn't notice Alastor watching him from the corner of his eye.

Nor does he notice Angel Dust watching Alastor watch him.

Charlie impatiently gestures for everyone to stand closer to each other. "Let's take a group photo!"

She sticks her arm out as far as possible, and everyone squeezes together for the picture - except for Alastor, who stands in the back. She looks rather disappointed when she sees the photo.

"Aw, Alastor! You made yourself all glitchy again."

"Ha-ha! I don't pose for photographs anymore, Charlie. But I'd be happy to provide you with an undistorted photo *if* we make a deal."

"Oh! Um… I'll pass on that."

They split apart after the photo. Angel Dust, Husk and Rosie clump together, whereas Niffty disappears, running off to go on the first ride she sees. Lucifer looks around the park, a bit in awe at its operational state; it's been a while since he visited Lu Lu World, and he half-expected it to be torn down, to be honest.

Charlie pats his arm to get his attention. "Dad, Vaggie and I are gonna hand out fliers now. We'll join you after!"

"I can help you with that, sweetie - "

"No, it's okay! I'll text you if I need anything. Just have fun with Al - everyone." Her freudian slip is overlooked by Lucifer. "Get a balloon! Wear a headband!"

"Shouldn't I be telling you that?" He smiles, a bit misty-eyed. "You've grown up so fast, Charlie. I still remember when you were a little girl, holding on to my hand because you were terrified of roller coasters."

Charlie looks a little embarrassed.

"Daaaaaaaaad."

"Okay, okay! You kids go ahead."

After she and Vaggie leaves, Lucifer wanders over to check out the headbands, as per Charlie's suggestion. They all contain a variety of animal ears on top - cat, dog, rabbit, but what *really* intrigues him are the ones that have deer ears.

Huh. It's blonde, Lucifer thinks. It matches his hair colour perfectly, and when he picks it up, he considers showing it to Alastor. He turns around, ready to mock him by using the headband, but Alastor is flanked on either side by Angel Dust and Rosie.

“Alastor, let’s go this way.” Rosie says cheerfully. She guides him by the crook of his elbow, and Lucifer feels that familiar prickle of jealousy at the sight.

“Hey, smiles.” Angel Dust has a charming grin on his face, and he thrusts a cup of coffee towards Alastor. “I got this just for you!”

Alastor squints at him suspiciously.

“I shall refrain.”

“Wh - hey! It’s just black coffee. Sure ya don’t want any?”

He looks down at the cup, and then back at Angel Dust. “Interesting. Now, why are you giving this to me?”

“I mean, you like it, right?” Angel Dust sends a discreet glance at Rosie, who nods infinitesimally. “Can’t I do somethin’ nice for the best radio demon in Hell?”

“I believe that I am the *only* radio demon.”

“Same thing!”

Alastor sniffs it warily, but he does end up taking the coffee. “Hmm. I will accept this for now.”

He turns around suddenly and catches Lucifer staring at him. He jumps at the eye contact, a little self-conscious, but Alastor merely lifts an eyebrow to convey -

Are you enjoying the show?

And Lucifer sticks his tongue out in response -

Whatever, bitch. I’m leaving now.

“If that is all, I shall go elsewhere.” Alastor starts to walk away - towards Lucifer, it seems (or maybe that’s just what he’s not-so-secretly hoping for).

“Aw, c’mon! Don’t ya wanna go on some rides with all of us first?” Angel Dust’s hand almost touches Alastor’s shoulder when Husk grabs his wrist, shaking his head.

“You’re gonna wanna keep your hands off of him.”

Alastor brightens at his words, and he pats Husk’s head condescendingly.

“What a thoughtful pet you are!”

“Get *off* of me!”

Alastor cackles, his laughter sharp and ear-splitting. Lucifer feels vaguely like he’s intruding, standing on the edges of their conversation, and he looks around to see if there’s a place he can abscond to.

Something shiny catches his attention - a giant building labelled The Mirror Maze. He recalls it to be some sort of labyrinthian attraction, containing a myriad of mirrors.

That'll work, he thinks, and he hurries inside.

"Come join us at the Hazbin Hotel!" Charlie waves her fliers. "We're here to help!"

"We also have food." Vaggie sighs as the park visitors avoid looking at her. "Babe, I'm not sure that this is working."

"C'mon, Vaggie! We just need *one* person who's interested." Charlie says determinedly. "And then maybe they'll tell their friends, and then their friends will tell other friends, and so on, and then we'll have more demons than we can handle!"

Charlie cups a hand around her mouth and yells as loud as she can. "We'll protect you from getting killed!"

This manages to pique someone's interest, and he walks over.

"Did you mention protection?"

"Oh! Hi there!" Charlie hands him a pamphlet, which he accepts gingerly. "We're here to help out sinners in Hell. At the Hazbin Hotel, we'll provide you with food, shelter and refuge."

"And what's the catch?"

"No catch!" She hesitates for a moment. "Well, um. I guess the only thing is, we'd like to help you work on yourself. Learn how to have a healthy lifestyle down here, and to become a better person."

The demon balks at this. "I don't really want to do that."

"Right." Charlie's shoulders sag a bit. "Well, if you change your mind, you know where to find us."

Promoting her hotel isn't going as smoothly as she had hoped for, but she almost expects that at this point. The demon skims over the pamphlet, looking thoughtful. "Well, my friend *was* having some issues recently. Maybe he'd be interested."

Finally, not a no! Charlie thinks triumphantly, and she beams at him. "Okay, great! Here, take some more fliers. You can give these to your friends!"

She waves good-bye, and she lets out a sigh when he's gone. "I should work on a better script. We might be coming off a li-ttle… creepy?"

"Hey, we've only done this for a little while." Vaggie says reassuringly. "We'll fine-tune it. And besides, we still have lots of opportunities to get new recruits."

Vaggie always manages to say the right things. Charlie scoops her into a hug, and presses her cheek against hers. "Of course! We make the best team."

She's about to walk elsewhere when she catches sight of Angel Dust, Rosie and Husk. For some strange reason, they're crowding around Alastor, who looks like he's trying to shake them off.

"Do you see that, Vaggie?"

Vaggie follows her gaze. "Oh, those three. They're always together these days."

Looking at Angel Dust reminds Charlie of a little something - something that she had pushed to the back of her mind when she was organizing the masquerade ball.

"Fine, but mark my words, I WILL get to the bottom of this. And I'll bring ya proof, too!" Angel Dust had said.

Maybe she should ask him what he's found out.

It appears that Lucifer had left.

Alastor tosses the coffee cup into the trash bin. "As entertaining as this has all been, I have other places to be."

“Alastor - ” Rosie begins, but he’s already trotting away, his figure disappearing into the entrance of the mirror maze. Once he’s out of earshot, Angel Dust elbows Husk.

“Hey, nice goin’! You really knew how to make Lucifer jealous, huh?”

“I ain’t responsible for this!” Husk growls. Angel Dust and Rosie both titter, clearly unconvinced.

“You did a great job, Husk. You should be proud!” Rosie looks over at the maze. “And now, let’s give them a little privacy.”

She sets up a **CLOSED** sign at the front of the attraction, preventing other people from going in.

Lucifer finds himself alone in the mirror maze.

Well, not exactly *alone.* He’s surrounded by his reflections, the mirrors lined up so that he’s unable to escape the million versions of himself. The mirrors go from floor-to-ceiling, and he’s able to see how forlorn he looks from every single angle.

Oh, yeah, because I’ve always wanted to know how the back of my head looks when I’m sad, Lucifer thinks sarcastically. He walks deeper and deeper into the labyrinth, his footsteps echoing in the silence.

When he reaches a fork in the maze, he slows to a stop, trying to figure out which way to go. There are two routes he can take,

either the left,

or the right.

He can’t help but assign meaning to the choices, the solitude making his mind go into overdrive, and the maze becomes a visual representation of his dilemma. With Alastor, obviously.

“So, I have two paths.” Lucifer murmurs, gesturing as he speaks. “So if I go to the left… it’ll be the same as always. I won’t say anything to him.”

He moves his arm to the other side. “And if I go to the right, I’ll say how I feel, and take that leap of faith.”

He crouches down, refusing to choose, and he stares into the mirror instead. He needs absolute certainty before he can decide what to do, which means…

the easiest thing to do right now is to make a list of The Facts™, and then analyze them with fastidious care, like he’s observing them under a microscope.

“Okay. What do I know for sure? We like spending time together,” Lucifer lifts up a finger to count, “we give each other gifts,” another finger, “get into fights,” third finger, “we comfort… each other…” wait, it’s a little embarrassing saying it aloud, “laugh together…” fifth finger, “hold… each… other…”

When he lays it out like this, Lucifer lights up, and he feels a spark of hope in his chest. But he snuffs it out as quick as it arrives, doubt plaguing his mind.

It’s probably a simple act for other people, to just ask; confess to the person, just so they can hear a simple yes or no, but for him…

He had lost his home in Heaven. Already lost Lilith. Lost Charlie once, too.

He doesn’t want to lose Alastor.

I’ll just observe him today, Lucifer decides, *figure out how he feels once and for all.*

There’s the sound of footsteps clicking on the floor, and it distracts him from his conundrum. Lucifer lifts his head up; even from a distance, he can recognize that manner of walking.

“Why’re you here?” He calls out. He hears a shuffle, more clacking, and then Alastor responds:

“Did I need permission to enter?”

“This *is* my park.”

“Why, I am a paying customer! Such attitude towards your patron.”

“You didn’t pay for shit!”

He hears pacing reverberate throughout the room. Lucifer gets up from the floor, fully alert now.

“Where *are* you?” Alastor says, peeved, and Lucifer can’t help but snicker.

“What, you lost or something?”

“Oh, I am quite aware of my surroundings. But you have probably gone astray, hmm?”

Lucifer looks around, and - god. Alastor's right. He's right in the middle of the maze, and the exit is nowhere to be seen. He looks at his golden eyes in his reflection, clear and determined, and he yells:

"Try and find me then, asshole!"

"Is that a challenge?" Alastor's voice has an edge to it.

"Duh."

And Lucifer sprints towards the right path.

He hears Alastor snarl - then the rapid fire stomping from running - Lucifer weaves in and out of the mirrors as quick as he can -

"You are incredibly noisy. I can hear you from miles away!" Alastor's voice echoes.

"That's some big talk when I still don't see you!"

Alastor growls, and out of nowhere, his silhouette emerges in one of the mirrors. Alastor's reflection doubles - triples - and Lucifer's not sure which direction he's coming from, which one is the real him, and he's turning around on his foot, swiveling and swiveling and

s
w
i
v
e
l
i
n
g

until -

"Found you."

Alastor grabs onto his arm, and Lucifer turns around to face him. They stand there for a moment - catch their breath - chests rising and falling in unison. Alastor's grip is tight but not uncomfortable, and eventually he loosens his hold.

"You are really bad at this."

"At running? You have longer legs!"

"Making excuses now, are we?" Alastor's smile widens at his words. "What a sore loser. But I expected nothing less from you."

He lets go of him, and Lucifer forces himself to turn around instead of grabbing onto Alastor's hand. Or his waist. Or some other part of him in an attempt to get closer, because

Lucifer's every action has taken on a warped meaning - neither innocent nor platonic - and it makes him feel rather guilty.

He starts to walk away, and after a beat, Alastor follows him.

Even though he's at the front, Lucifer can still see Alastor's image reflected on every single mirror. His eyes wander towards him unwittingly; he's always been drawn to him, a magnetic attraction, and it's stupid that he didn't see it before.

And speaking of things he never noticed, Lucifer realizes now that he has yet to initiate a hug. It's normally Alastor who instigates it, because he's quite particular with his boundaries. Although, he had mentioned…

"Nothing you do makes me uncomfortable."

He stops walking when the notion enters his mind, and Alastor bumps into his back.

"Is there a reason that you have stopped?" He hasn't stepped away yet, and Lucifer can feel his warmth on his back.

Just reply and be relaxed, he commands, and he succumbs to a different want; a question.

"How's your head?"

Alastor's eyes flick up, and their gazes meet through the mirror. "Better."

"Did you take medication or something?"

"No." Alastor sounds rather clipped. But then he gives in, expanding on his statement. "It appears that the cause was… I had been overthinking."

"It hurt because you were using your *brain?"*

A snort escapes from Lucifer's mouth. And then he doubles over, laughing so hard his stomach starts to hurt.

"That's what happens when you're not used to using your head, dumbass!" Lucifer gasps, trying to breathe, and Alastor glares at him.

"I just had far too many concerns. But *you* wouldn't understand. They do say that idiots tend to be happier."

Lucifer pays no heed, still howling with laughter, and Alastor watches him with rapt attention.

"So - " Lucifer takes in a deep breath, trying to calm himself. "So the solution was, what? Did you turn your brain off?"

They reach a dead end, and they turn back. Alastor puts a hand on the mirror before pointing towards the right path, indicating that they should go that direction.

“Nothing that dramatic. I merely decided to take action.”

“Oh.” Lucifer considers this for a moment as he strides beside him. To be honest, it sounds like a good solution for his own predicament.

(Moving forward, instead of staying stagnant. No matter what the results may bring.)

They finally make it to the exit, and Alastor puts his hand on the doorknob. “So we’ve made it to the end. All those twists and turns made it seem like we'd be stuck here evermore.”

“Yeah.” Lucifer manages to reply. “I guess, the only way to leave the maze is through.”

They’re still inside the building when Alastor hands over an item. The tips that he had read from the book suggested gift-giving, so he had prepared a little something.

“You were staring at this earlier.”

Lucifer looks down at the object in his hands, and his eyes widen when he realizes -

it’s the deer ear headband.

“Oh!” Lucifer grasps it in his hands. “You noticed? Yeah! I wanted to show this to you. Don’t these look like your ears?”

“Do they now?” Alastor peers at it inquisitively. “You always seem to miscalculate the size of my ears. They are not *this* large.”

“Uh, go back to the maze and look at your reflection, ‘cause this is basically what you look like.” Lucifer puts it on his head anyway, and it blends in with his hair seamlessly. “See? What’d I tell ya?”

The deer ears look so - on Lucifer, it - it’s fluffy, and blonde, and Alastor can’t take his eyes off of him, spellbound, and it’s -

Lucifer reaches up to take it off, and Alastor grabs onto his hand, stopping him in his tracks.

“A marked improvement.” He finally says. “Keep it on.”

“Oh.” Lucifer’s eyes dart between Alastor’s hand and his face. “Sure I don’t look stupid?”

He’s torn between saying a candid *never* or a teasing *always,* but he ends up saying something else.

“You should do whatever you like, instead of worrying so much.” Alastor takes a step back after this, glancing down at him, and there’s a strange expression on Lucifer’s face. Like he’s observing him carefully.

“Really?”

He clears his throat, and there’s a smattering of a blush forming on his face. Alastor has always liked it when his face turned red - from anger, from embarrassment - but it’s gotten to the point where he’s almost transfixed by the sight.

Lucifer crosses his arms. Uncrosses them. Runs his fingers through his hair, and adjusts his headband carefully.

“Okay. I will.”

And then Lucifer pulls him into his arms, hugging him close.

Sera has a hard time processing what she just heard.

“What did you say? Lucifer and Alastor were doing *what?”*

The angel groans at this. “Your highness, we already told you! They were, uh… committing felonious acts. In public.”

“PDA! Lots of it!” The other angel says hotly.

“Are you telling me that they came up to Heaven to…?” Sera is unable to even say it. “That can’t be their sole purpose. What exactly are they plotting?”

“I don’t know!” The angel shrieks. Sera sighs, and waves them way.

“I understand. I will investigate, and get to the bottom of this.”

Chapter End Notes

So this is Act 4: Hotel Promotion (Side A) / Mutual Courtship! I'm going to keep this act shorter compared to my other ones.

Fun Facts:
- Lucifer was the first to chase after Alastor during their friendship (specifically ch. 4/5) so I had Alastor initiate romance this time!
- The maze is a symbolic reflection of Alastor and Lucifer's emotions, of course
- The chapter title, The Right Path: Lucifer picks the right path of the maze subconsciously. The word "right" functions as a dual meaning: right (as in your right hand) and right (as in "correct")
- Angel Dust's quote, and watching Alastor watch Lucifer, parallels ch. 9
- Alastor hugged Lucifer in ch. 11 and ch. 16
- Alastor mentioned "nothing you do makes me uncomfortable" from ch. 20
- The wrong size of Alastor's ears come from ch. 14

See you next Friday! Leave theories/suggestions in the comments <3

The Photo

Chapter Notes

CH. 23 FANART:
- drawn by @dirtgrubber: 1 + 2
- drawn by: @fullychaotichell
- comic by: @sqxsh3
- comic by @CiyakuR: 1 + 2
- drawn by: @strwberryicing
- drawn by: @kimuby-am
- drawn by: @elkaseltzer
- drawn by: @twosoulss77
- drawn by @grijannax: 1 + 2
- drawn by: @myntesuniverse
- drawn by: @3ggsnbutter
- drawn by: @blackzer0
- meme animation by: @rawlvooder

Beautiful!!! Send me anything via Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

If Alastor had suffered from overthinking before, he's having the exact opposite problem now. All his thoughts fly out the window at Lucifer's hug, his mind empty save for the sound of a dial up tone,

krrrrssshhhhhhhh.

Alastor glances down at the top of his head. Lucifer's warm and solid, his arms wrapped around his waist snugly; it feels phenomenal - can't complain - *no* complaints - but he does have some questions.

"How unusual." His radio filter slides off, and he's too flustered to put it back on. "Is there a reason for this?"

"We made a promise, right?" Lucifer's voice sounds muffled; his face is buried in Alastor's chest, as though hiding. "Hugging whenever, wherever. What, did you think only you could do it?"

Alastor places a hesitant hand on Lucifer's head. When he doesn't shake him off, Alastor feels emboldened enough to run his fingers through his hair, his blonde locks smooth as silk.

"Yes, well. I do strive to uphold my promises."

“Not a de - huh?” Lucifer lifts his head up. “You didn’t call it a deal this time!”

Alastor squints at him, before pressing his face back onto his chest. “Remain silent if you’d like to keep holding me.”

Lucifer really does stop talking, and Alastor moves his hands down to his shoulders; wraps his arms around Lucifer carefully, their chest-waist-hips pressed together; and despite the height difference, their bodies fit perfectly.

It’s their third time, being this close. And with each subsequent hug, Alastor feels like an addict.

The more he receives, the more he needs.

(A never-ending loop.)

Eventually, Lucifer relinquishes his grip, his hands slowly sliding off of his waist, and the friction causes tingles to go right down Alastor’s spine. He still keeps his hands on Lucifer’s shoulders, and they gaze at each other, red eyes into golden ones.

“C’mon, let’s go. I wanna ride a roller-coaster.” He smiles, beautifully radiant, and Alastor stares at his mouth. He fixes Lucifer's headband to occupy himself, making sure it's upright, and he forces out:

“Can you even reach the height requirement?”

“HEY!”

Lucifer measures himself against a **THIS TALL TO RIDE** sign, just in case.

“Did I make it?” He asks, his back pressed against the sign. Alastor takes a step closer in order to examine him.

“Just barely!”

Lucifer turns around to take a look. “Okay - ”

and glowers when he sees that he has far surpassed the minimum height. “What do you mean, *‘just barely’?* I’m obviously much, much taller!”

Alastor cackles, sharp and ear-splitting. “That is quite the exaggeration!”

“You gotta check your eyesight, bitch. Your monocle is useless.”

“Oh, there is no need to be concerned. But someone as ancient as you should get a check-up!”

Lucifer yanks him by his jacket -

“Uh, I’m in my prime! Fight me and I’ll whoop your ass.”

Alastor grabs his vest -

“Oh? Are you inviting me to a skirmish? I certainly won’t turn *that* down.”

“Alastor! Dad!” Charlie’s voice cuts through the crowd, and they pause their scuffle. “I thought I recognized your shouting.”

“Charlie!” Lucifer waves at her, and she makes her way over. The rest of the hotel staff trail behind her, and they all congregate in front of the rollercoaster.

“Oh, you got a headband!” Charlie’s eyes flit between Lucifer and Alastor’s ears. “It looks… good! Vaggie, we should get some too. You’d be soooo cute as a cat!”

“A cat? I dunno, sweetie.” Vaggie blushes at first, but then she looks at Lucifer curiously. “Hold up. Are those deer ears?”

He touches his headband for a second before nodding. “Yep!”

“Oh?” Rosie and Angel Dust speak in unison. Lucifer raises an eyebrow at their response; he accidentally makes eye contact with Husk, who shakes his head.

“You don’t wanna know.”

Angel Dust walks forward, and taps the **THIS TALL TO RIDE** sign. He looks down at Lucifer with a smirk on his face.

“Are ya checkin’ your height?”

“Yeah. Not everyone is as tall as this guy.” Lucifer gestures towards Alastor. “If I didn’t make it, I’d have to force him to slip some inches in me. Put it in!”

Angel Dust splutters, and he hits his chest a few times to breathe. “What in the - what the fuck are you *talking* about?”

“You know.” Lucifer tiptoes, trying to look taller. “Give me some of his height?”

When it finally clicks in his head, Angel Dust lets out a grumble. He mimes strangling Lucifer again, and it's a familiar sight at this point. "You… every time you talk…"

"Look at my height now!" Niffty yelps, scampering over to the sign. Charlie puts her hand on Niffty's head to measure, and then shakes her head ruefully.

"Niffty, um, it looks like you can't go on the ride. Can you wait for us down here?"

"Aw." She pouts, but nods anyway. "Fine."

They line up to go onto the ride, a winding roller-coaster with extreme swoops and drops. When it's their turn, Lucifer looks over at the seats, which are arranged so that each row can fit two or three people.

Angel Dust and Husk take the first row.

Alastor settles into the second row, and before Lucifer can sit down -

Rosie somehow makes it in first, and sits beside Alastor.

"Rosie?" Alastor sounds taken-aback, but then his voice returns to its usual smooth inflection. "How lovely to see you! And are you enjoying yourself so far?"

Lucifer feels a little sheepish, because he was about to sidle in beside Alastor. An automatic reaction. Like it was a no-brainer, that of course he'd sit with him, why wouldn't they?

Maybe Alastor felt the same way as he did, because he seemed surprised that Rosie had sat down beside him.

Next time, I'll go for what I want. Lucifer thinks resolutely. He averts his gaze and goes to the third row instead.

Ever the angel, Charlie descends beside him.

"Let's sit together, dad!"

"Charlie! Of course!" Lucifer beams, happy that she's still willing to sit with her dad at the theme park. It brings him back memories of when she was younger, and he affectionately squeezes her shoulder when she sits down.

"This park hasn't changed all that much, huh? I think I wanna eat some food after this. Handing out fliers made me hungry."

"I'll get you something, Charlie." Vaggie plunks down beside her. They all pull the lap bar down, and Lucifer tucks his deer ears into his vest, not wanting it to fly off on the ride. As the roller-coaster cart lurches forward, he turns to look at his daughter.

"Hey! How's the recruiting going? Need any help?"

Charlie's smile resembles more of a grimace.

“We have some *maybes,* but nothing firm… yet!” After a moment, she perks up again. “I have some more pamphlets, so I’ll hand them out at a different location. And then I think I’ll try busking after! That should get some attention.”

The ride slowly climbs upwards, the wheels clinking on the tracks. Lucifer mulls over Charlie’s proposal thoughtfully.

“Like a street performance? I can play something! I’ve been meaning to work on my accordion, anyway.”

“You certainly require the practice.” Alastor calls out, clearly eavesdropping. Lucifer kicks the back of his seat, and Alastor snarls back.

“Like you’re one to talk. I know you hit the wrong notes when we performed together!”

“I was simply distracted by your awful playing. Did you know you have no rhythm whatsoever?”

“I’ll show you!” Lucifer scowls. “Pick an instrument, and we’ll see who the better musician is.”

“Oh, I gladly accept.” Alastor sneers. “I am dying to put you in your place.”

“Hey-hey-hey!” Charlie says frantically. They’re at the highest point of the ride now, right before the drop. “Alastor, dad, why don’t we all just, tone it down for a second, and thennn*AHHHHHHH!”*

The roller-coaster hurtles down at an alarming speed, and that ends the rest of the conversation.

Well. He definitely won’t do *that* again.

Alastor shifts into shadow, disappearing immediately after the ride. Amusement parks, roller-coasters, large groups of rowdy people… none of these things particularly interest him. But it was admittedly fun enough to hear Lucifer holler as the vehicle sped by, delight apparent in his voice.

He's standing at the roller-coaster photo counter, and he looks at the monitors. A camera had gone off halfway through the ride, and Alastor made sure to distort himself when the lights flashed. He searches through the screens for their photo, and when his eyes land on the picture in question-

- he lets out a snort, because Lucifer's image is captured in mid-blink.

Again.

"Aw, fuck!" Lucifer bemoans, looking at the photo with dismay. He must have teleported, because none of the others have appeared yet. "Why does this keep happening?"

"You are quite non-photogenic. Why don't you practice in front of a mirror so that you can look better, hmm?"

"Not all of us can just glitch out our faces, douchebag."

"Such a pity."

"Whatever. Quit looking at my face and look at yourself. Your jacket is all messed up."

Alastor looks down, and he lets out a sigh when he sees his overcoat. The lap bar had crushed his jacket, creasing it to oblivion; yet another reason to dislike theme parks.

"How unfortunate." Alastor tugs at the material. "And this is my favourite overcoat, as well."

"You literally only wear that one."

"Hence why it is my favourite!"

He starts unbuttoning his coat, not wanting to wear a wrinkled garment. Besides, it's rather sweltering today, so it's more practical to remove it. He shrugs it off his shoulders - past his elbows - pulls it off his wrists, and he's just in his red shirt now.

It's after he adjusts his suspenders, tugging at them with his fingers, that he realizes Lucifer had gone completely silent.

"Now. Where to next?" Alastor asks. Still, there's no response, and he looks up with some irritation. "Are you even listening - "

He stops.

Because.

He catches sight of Lucifer's heavy stare, eyes burning right through Alastor's skin-muscles-bones, deep into the core of his being. It trips him up, makes it hard to formulate sentences. How unlike him.

He watches as Lucifer approaches him,

one

step

at

a

time,

and when Lucifer opens his mouth to speak, Alastor's eyes flick down to his lips again. He physically can't stop looking - can't stop staring -

"I didn't realize you wore suspenders." Lucifer's words startle him. There's a catch in Alastor's throat, and he plasters on an unaffected smile.

"Yes, well." His voice is deliberately even. "There's quite a bit you don't know about me."

Lucifer lifts up a hand; slides his fingers around one of Alastor's suspenders, and grips it tightly. He's pulling him closer, inch-by-inch-by-inch until their chests bump up against each other, the distance so negligible it's practically nonexistent.

"It's kinda hot."

He starts at this - *did I hear that correctly?* - and it's the second time today that Lucifer caught him off-guard. He's so close, looking up at him with half-lidded eyes, and Alastor forces himself to reply.

"What was that?"

Lucifer shoots him a mischievous smile. Like he's hiding a secret.

"The weather." He says, soft and hushed. "That's why you took your jacket off, right?"

And Alastor feels like Lucifer might be teasing him, somehow.

More than that, he feels rather cornered. Pinned under his stare, but it's quite thrilling; tempting, by all definitions of the word. He snaps his fingers to teleport his overcoat away, never tearing his eyes away from Lucifer.

"Indeed."

"Hey!" Charlie waves at them, and Alastor almost lets out a growl. He wants some distance from the others, a moment *alone* with Lucifer, which apparently was too much to ask for. The rest of the hotel staff come up to meet them, and Lucifer had taken a step back, his hand dropping from his suspenders.

"Alastor, shall we go on a different ride?" Rosie asks, chipper as always. He's about to come up with an excuse to decline when Lucifer answers instead, looking strangely determined.

“He’s busy.” Lucifer sounds stern. He nods at the ferris wheel with his head, and he looks like he’s not taking no for an answer. “We’re going there.”

His commanding tone doesn’t go unnoticed, and there’s a tinge of excitement that strums under Alastor’s skin, the slightest prickle of interest. It’s fascinating to hear Lucifer speak with such authority, when he’s usually so laidback.

He rather enjoys seeing him like this.

“Yes. We certainly won’t have to worry about the height limit on that ride.” Alastor says nonchalantly, stepping in tandem with Lucifer. They walk off, and the rest of the hotel staff watch their receding backs.

“Angel, can I talk to you privately?” Charlie whispers. Angel Dust looks confused, but follows after her anyway. They walk over to the cotton candy stand, and he leans against the machine.

“Give me two of ‘em.” Angel Dust tells the cashier. As she’s spinning the cotton candy, Angel Dust looks at Charlie. “What’s up, baby?”

“Angel,” Charlie asks delicately, “do you remember the masquerade ball?”

“Yeah. Why?”

Okay. How do I bring this up? Charlie thinks worriedly. She wants to know more about Angel Dust’s discoveries, but she doesn’t want to breach her dad’s privacy in any way.

Still… she’s a little… curious.

Every time she *thinks* she understands her dad’s situation a little better, he tells her something that throws her off. Sometimes Alastor and her dad seem like they’re getting along, thick as thieves. Sometimes they seem like they’re about two seconds away from throwing fists. And truthfully, he’s not one to lie to her. So…

“You had an investigation right? Something about my dad, and, um, Alastor?” She settles on saying. “How’s it going?”

Angel Dust watches the cotton candy twirl away in the machine. He doesn't seem to be paying attention, but as the words register in his head, he whirls around frantically.

"Wait a sec - Charlie! Ya wanna know my findings?"

"So you did find something?"

"Oh, I found *many* somethings." Angel Dust snickers. "You wanna join the team?

"What?"

"Here's your cotton candy!" The staff says cheerfully. Angel Dust grabs them both and offers one to Charlie, who accepts it in a daze.

"Oh, but then your name would ruin the flow." Angel Dust thinks about it. "Team H.A.R.D with a C? Whatever. I'll show ya what I found back at the hotel."

DAUGHTER!
> here's the group photo, dad!

They're sitting in one of the ferris wheel pods as Lucifer reads Charlie's text. He flips his phone horizontally to see the full picture, and they're all squashed up against each other - save for Alastor, who is standing in the back. He's practically unrecognizable, a mess of pixels and distortions.

"What are you looking at?" Alastor extends his hand out. "Let me see your speaking telegraph."

"You mean my *phone?"* Lucifer says wryly. He does hand it over, and Alastor's fingers graze against his in the process.

It's electric; the briefest of touches; over in an instant.

It's embarrassing how much it affects him, though, and Lucifer hurriedly pulls his hand back. He had succumbed to his earlier impulse - pulling Alastor in by his suspenders - but that had used up all his bravery at this point.

Alastor is none the wiser to his internal dilemma, merely peering down at the photo.

“You seem to possess a special talent.” A chuckle escapes from his throat, and Alastor looks like he’s on the verge of full-blown laughter.

“What talent?”

“You happen to be mid-blink in every photo.”

“What!” Lucifer yanks his phone back, and he zooms in on the group photo. Which… fuck. Yeah. He’s blinking in this. “Okay, maybe in *this* photo, but check out my other ones.”

He pulls open his image gallery and starts swiping through them, trying to find a good picture, but. Oh, god. How *is* he in mid-blink in most of these? Lucifer scratches his head, a bit abashed.

“I guess that’s just how I look.”

“Is it now?” Alastor plucks his phone back out from his hands, and scrolls through his gallery as well. “How unsightly.”

Normally, he’d stop someone from grabbing his phone in this manner, but he doesn’t really mind today. He watches as Alastor continues to check out his photos of food - of Charlie - screenshots of stupid things he found funny - and Lucifer sets his deer ears back on his own head, making sure it’s on properly.

Alastor pauses scrolling to click on their selfie, the one with Velvette.

“Ah, yes. This photo.” Alastor’s eye twitches from annoyance. “Those Vees are terribly vexing, despite being such *failures.”*

Lucifer leans in to look at it. It’s still the only photo that they have of the two of them, even after spending all this time together. Which was kind of a shame, considering that it’s ruined by Velvette sticking her middle finger up.

He stares at Alastor’s profile, observing his features carefully. His sharp nose. His long lashes. His permanent smile, curved upwards playfully. He’s struck with the need to immortalize it, somehow, and when he looks back down at his phone, an idea forms in his mind.

“Hey.” Lucifer says hesitantly. “Since I won the race in Heaven… I know what request to do now.”

Alastor lifts his head up, his hand still holding the phone. “Oh? Enlighten me, then.”

“I want a photo with you.”

Lucifer drums his fingers on the seat nervously, not sure how Alastor is going to take it. It’s a waste of a request, to be honest. He knows that it’ll end up distorted, but - whatever. It would be nice to have just *one* image together that doesn’t have other people in it.

“A photo?” Alastor’s eyes widen imperceptibly at his words. He lets out a sigh, but he sounds more amused than anything. “You are the winner of our wager. If that is what you wish, then who am I to deny it?”

He beckons him closer with one finger, and Lucifer obliges. He presses up against him, arm against arm, and then Alastor aims the phone at them.

“Smile. You are never fully dressed without one!”

Click!

“There you go.” Alastor hands his phone back. “A photo where you’re not in mid-blink. You are welcome.”

Lucifer looks down at the selfie they took, already prepared for one half of the frame to be unnaturally glitchy.

But there are a few constants in the universe.

The speed of light.

The gravitational pull.

The fact that Alastor will always be *surprising*.

The picture shows Lucifer smiling widely, his deer-ear headband looking at home with his flaxen hair. His eyes look happy and, mercifully, wide open. It’s quite possibly the best he’s ever looked in a photo.

And Alastor.

He has a small smile on his face, and it’s a little gentler; different from usual. His hair is still pulled back into a ponytail, a few strands framing his face elegantly, and their heads are slightly tilted towards one another. The setting sun in the background washes everything in warm colours, pinks and yellows and purples, and *god* he wants to print and frame it right this instant.

The kicker of it all -

“You didn’t glitch yourself! Why?” Lucifer is absolutely floored. “And wait. You know how to use a phone camera?”

“I am not *completely* out of the know." Alastor answers the second question, and avoids the first. "Besides, it’s rather intuitive!”

Lucifer furrows his eyebrows, a cobweb of a memory drifting in his head. He vaguely recalls the other times when Alastor didn’t distort himself on a screen. The first, being the picture he had burned from the V Tower.

And the second…

“Y’know, you also didn’t distort the video of us at Mimzy’s Club. Why’s that?”

Alastor lets out a noise of disgruntlement, short and quiet. It’s a little cute, actually.

“I’ll edit it now, then.”

“WHAT!” Lucifer gapes at him. “You’re gonna glitch it *now?* After all these months?”

The ferris wheel stops moving, and they’re sitting at the highest point. When Lucifer looks ahead, he can see the entirety of Hell. The city lights twinkle prettily, and it’s quite beautiful from up above - a view that can’t be beat.

“Now, now. That sounds much too troublesome. So I’ll leave the video be.” Alastor sidesteps the question, and Lucifer knows better than to needle him for more answers. They sit in silence for a bit, watching the sun slowly dip down the horizon.

Lucifer looks down at their photo again. It’s kind of mesmerizing, really, and he doesn’t notice that Alastor is trying to get his attention until he pulls the phone out of his hands.

“This rectangle is distracting you!” Alastor says petulantly, and Lucifer snorts, feeling a little bit like he’s getting scolded.

“Yeah, yeah.”

It’s Alastor’s turn to examine the picture. After a moment, he rests his hand on his neck, his smile strained.

“If you are going to be *this* difficult about it…”

“I literally didn’t say anything!”

Alastor ignores him, and continues. “By that point in time, you made for... *acceptable*... company. And, seeing as it was our first performance together, it felt prudent to commemorate it, in some way. So I permitted Charlie to film.”

And then he sits up straighter, his usual cocky grin gracing his face. “Unfortunately, you turned out to be quite the thorn in my side.”

Lucifer rolls his eyes at this, but he’s a little pleased by Alastor’s admission. “Well, you’re the pain in my ass.”

“You are the bane of my existence!”

“You - ”

The ride grinds to a halt, and Lucifer lurches forward unexpectedly. He steadies himself, putting his hand on the handle, and then leans out the window.

“What the hell was that?” When he looks down, he catches sight of Niffty, who had pulled the lever.

“Excuse me, miss!” The ride attendant hurries over. “Don’t play with that!”

“IT’S MY TURN NOW!”

“Niffty!” Vaggie scolds, running over to her. It’s hard to hear the rest from up high, and Lucifer leans back in his seat.

“Ah, Niffty.” Alastor chuckles, his chin in his hands. “Such a troublemaker.”

And then he glances over at him. “But you are a thousand times worse, *Lucifer.”*

“Oh yeah?” He says hotly. “Well, you piss me off, Alas - ”

He pauses here. There’s something unpleasant he had been meaning to bring up but never did, precisely because it was difficult to talk about. But it’s a long-overdue apology at this point, and he needs to get it off his chest.

“I gotta apologize about something.” Lucifer holds up a hand, signalling for Alastor to stay quiet. “And just shut up and don’t attack me until I finish.”

“What a *wonderful* way to begin.” He responds dryly. Still, Alastor entwines his fingers together on his lap, listening attentively.

“Sorry - ” He bristles at the word, but Lucifer persists, “I keep saying your name, even though you hated it when I said it at the jazz club. Sometimes it just, you know, slips out. But… I’ll make sure to stop using it.”

Alastor narrows his eyes. The ride slowly moves forward again, and they stare at each other in silence.

“You are incorrect.” He finally says. “As always.”

“Uh, not sure if the ‘as always’ part was necessary - ”

“I was surprised when you first said it.”

Alastor seems introspective.

“Because…”

He then turns to Lucifer, unblinking. He looks like he’s wrestling with some inner debate, his hands wringing together so tightly it leaves crescent-shaped indents in its wake. It takes a while, but Alastor manages to get the words out.

“I rather enjoyed hearing it from your mouth.”

And he adds, under his breath:

“Perhaps a little too much.”

Lucifer has to school his face into a neutral expression, but he's absolutely flabbergasted by his confession. His heart hammers in his throat, and he glances down at Alastor's hands, his scarlet fingers still clenched in a death grip.

"Well! You can take that as my compliment for you today." Alastor says coolly, but his deer ears are pressed down flat, clearly on edge. "And you? What will you say about me?"

Compliment exchanges. Right. It's something that comes naturally to them now, where they don't really have to ask for one, but Lucifer still relishes the opportunity when it comes. He thinks about it for a second, and lands on something that's about as equally raw as Alastor's praise.

"I liked when you said that... I was *your* king."

"My king?" Alastor echoes, and - yeah.

Still sounds nice.

"Mhmm, mhmm, yepyepyepyep." Lucifer nods vigorously. Whatever. He'll allow himself this one indulgence.

"How curious." Alastor's lips quirk into a bigger smile. "Very well, then. I will keep that in mind."

The warm light pours in, and it makes Alastor's crimson eyes glow brilliantly. Lucifer used to hate the colour red, but he has to admit it's grown on him, the association with Alastor too deep to ignore. He fixates on Alastor's smile, how inviting it looks -

but then the ride lurches again, and he hears the peal of laughter coming from the crowd, noisy and grating.

"MISS!" The ride attendant yells anxiously. "PLEASE STOP!"

"NEVER!" Niffty's crazed laugh drifts upwards. The moment is broken, but it doesn't matter.

Lucifer feels certain - now more than ever -

he wants to be with Alastor.

Which sounds so absolutely ridiculous he almost laughs, because if someone told him a year ago that he'd have feelings for *Alastor* of all people, he would have killed them on the spot.

I gotta make this special, he thinks. He needs it to be perfect - somewhere private - do something that Alastor would like, and confess to him properly. Unlike here, where it's cramped and loud and messy and completely not Alastor's style, not at all.

Alastor lets out a scoff, visibly annoyed by the interruption. "So boisterous."

"Don't like amusement parks?"

“A mere mimicry of adrenaline. No *actual* risk of dying. But I suppose the concept is entertaining enough.” Alastor relents. “And watching you scream your head off at a silly ride is quite an experience, ha-HA!”

“My reaction is *normal!”* Lucifer scowls. “Who just sits there silently on a roller-coaster?!”

“Oh, when you’ve brushed against death many-a-time, not much can faze you.”

“Okay, new plan.” Lucifer decides. “You and I, we’ll come back, but I’ll close the park and get the rides to be extra scary. Helps to know someone powerful, huh?”

“Really now? Abusing your authority? What would the papers say?”

But Alastor’s deer ears perk up at the suggestion.

At the end of the ride, Alastor runs over the list in his head:

- Make him laugh
- Give him something he likes
- Look your best

The advice was dull, but it seemed to be effective enough. Curiously enough, he felt as though Lucifer had been following the same checklist throughout the day. Almost like a dance, really, the way they poke and prod at each other.

When the ferris wheel pulls into a stop, Alastor hops onto the platform.

“Shall we return to the hotel? I’ve had enough of this insipid little park.” Alastor says. He waits for Lucifer to get off, but he’s still sitting in the pod, lost in thought.

How strange, Alastor thinks. He taps his shoulder with his radio cane, trying to get his attention.

“I don’t take kindly to those who ignore me.”

“Oh!” Lucifer lifts his head up, as though genuinely surprised that Alastor was there. “Sorr - I mean, I was making a plan.”

“What plan?”

Lucifer grins, and it’s hard to decipher what he’s thinking. “You’ll find out in a few days. Meet me then.”

“How intriguing. And what is so important that you can’t simply tell me now?”

Lucifer looks away at this, and Alastor feels even more suspicious now.

“I could, but. I just, uh. Have some preparations to do.”

Preparations. How vague. But it doesn’t seem to be a bad thing, based on Lucifer’s behaviour. The blithe smile on his face. He’s still wearing the deer ears on his head, and it’s quite outrageous that something like a *headband* could be so alluring.

“Hmm.” Alastor gazes at Lucifer, wanting but unable to read his mind. “I shall look forward to it, then.”

“Emily.”

“Yes?”

“The other day, when I was speaking with the Princess… you went to pick up Alastor and Lucifer. What were they doing?”

Emily pauses organizing her files at Sera’s question, and she looks at her curiously.

“Oh! They were on a date.”

“A *date?”* Sera echoes, disbelieving.

“Yeah! They were at the rose garden. The one with the ducks.”

Emily is blissfully unaware of the bombshell she had just dropped on her, and for a moment, Sera is speechless. She manages to pull herself together, and speaks with more urgency this time.

“You must be mistaken. I can’t imagine that they came to Heaven just to eat ice cream and look at ducks.”

“Aw, I mean, why not?” Emily grins. “It’s beautiful here, after all! Next time, I’ll give them a list of good date spots.”

As Emily continues chattering away, Sera steeples her hands, concentrating deeply. This didn’t make any sense; for god’s sake, this was *Lucifer.* They may have been close, once upon a time, but he was the current monarch of Hell. Did he have some sort of plan afoot?

“I will have to bring him up to question him.”

Chapter End Notes

Fun Facts:
- The hugging promise is from ch. 11
- Usually Alastor will say “we made a deal” and then Lucifer will follow up with “not a deal,” they’ve been doing that since ch. 1 LOL
- Angel Dust and the strangling thing comes from ch. 11.
- The inappropriate comments from Lucifer are from ch. 7, ch. 11, ch. 15
- In ch. 9, Lucifer mistakenly thought Alastor hates it when he says his name. So I had them clear it up now.
- The photo from V Tower (ch. 4) and they performed at Mimzy's Club together (ch. 8, video recording)

See you next Friday! Leave theories/suggestions in comments, as per usual <3

The Concern

Chapter Notes

CH. 24 FANART:
- drawn by @dirtgrubber: 1 + 2
- drawn by: @scarletpineapple

OSAS Music Playlists: 1 + 2

Thank you! Send me anything via Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lucifer sits on the roof of the hotel, watching as the sun slowly peeks over the horizon. He's been there all night, and he's starting to feel a little delirious due to sleep-deprivation.

It's worth it, though, because he *finally* has an idea for the perfect confession. The only problem is that he requires absolute privacy to get everything done, so he'll have to leave the hotel for a few days. Where can he work, without anyone bothering him?

I guess I'll have to go… there. Lucifer thinks begrudgingly. Shit. He's not looking forward to it, to be honest. But if it's necessary, then…

His mind feels a little muddled, body slipping back into the arms of sleep, and so he doesn't notice the person standing behind him - not until they shout a cheery,

"He-llo!"

"ACK!"

Lucifer tilts his head back, all the while scowling. At this angle, Alastor is upside-down, which is a perspective he's never seen before. "I told you that the next time you try to scare me, we're gonna fight."

"Oh? Shall we then?"

Lucifer narrows his eyes, knowing that Alastor is being completely, 100% serious. He stands up and faces him, watching his red hair sway gently in the breeze - the calm before the storm.

They take a second to silently size each other up.

Lucifer moves his leg back.

Alastor crouches down.

And in a flash, they strike each other - Lucifer twists his body to dodge - Alastor chases him in hot pursuit - it's a familiar waltz, and Lucifer can guess where he will hit next -

"You need some new moves!"

"Just stretching my legs!" Alastor sings. "Best to watch your back."

True to his word, Alastor speeds up, almost a blur at this rate, and Lucifer throws a punch - Alastor leans back to avoid it - he's supernaturally flexible, and he grins harder when Lucifer misses.

"You are quite careless today."

"Big talk when you haven't even hit me yet, douchebag."

Lucifer retreats and Alastor pursues, his shoes crunching on the tiles as he sprints, getting closer closer closer, Alastor's hand shoots out but he jumps a little too far a little too fast a little too much and -

the tile Alastor stands on snaps under his footing and falls right off the roof, taking him with it. He smile freezes on his face, seemingly shocked that he's in mid-air; red-hot panic hurtles through Lucifer's veins, and he runs forward, shouting:

"ALASTOR!"

He thrusts his arm out, hand outstretched, but he misses him by the tiniest margin, watches with horror as gravity does its job and makes Alastor free-fall down down downwards-

- and Lucifer jumps off the roof without hesitation.

All six of his wings fan out, and he plummets after him, catching up in an instant. Alastor lands snugly in his arms, bridal-style. He's incredibly lanky, long limbs barely fitting in Lucifer's embrace, and he holds him tighter to prevent him from slipping.

Alastor's eyes widen in surprise at the physical contact. It's not the first time Lucifer has carried him in this manner - they've done this before, when they had to do the trust fall.

At the time, Alastor had been stiff as a brick, uncomfortable and angry.

Now, he slings one of his arms over Lucifer's shoulder, ever-graceful. "What is all this for? I did not need to be saved."

"I know that!" Lucifer grumbles. "But I… I moved without thinking."

It's obvious that Alastor can take care of himself. In fact, he probably could have summoned up his shadow beings, or used any one of his other powers to keep himself from harm's way. He's being irrational, swooping down to grab him like this.

(God. Alastor always makes him react so instinctively.)

“You jumped off a building without a second thought?” Alastor says in disbelief. His hand delicately clasps onto Lucifer’s shoulder blade; a careful touch. “Hmm. Aren’t you reckless.”

“Uh, a ‘thank you’ would be nice, you ass.”

Lucifer flaps his wings and brings them back onto the roof. He glances down at Alastor, and from this vantage point, he can see the deer antlers that are usually concealed in his hair. They're so tiny and delicate, gleaming like onyx.

Unsurprisingly, Alastor doesn’t thank him, merely shooting him a wicked smile instead.

“As I mentioned before, you lack self-preservation skills. Truly an idiot, through and through!”

He groans, and Alastor snickers at his reaction, seeming to experience great joy at his expense.

“Fine then! Get off!”

Without a warning, Lucifer drops him onto the roof, and Alastor lands with a painful *thunk!*

“How *very* mature.” Alastor says sarcastically. But then he sweeps his leg, forcing Lucifer to fall flat on his face.

“OW!”

They both sit up on the roof now, glaring at each other. Lucifer is about to grab him when the sun rises up even higher, the golden rays shining a bit too brightly into his eyes. It’s a reminder that he should probably depart by now - he’s rather eager to start his plans.

Lucifer turns to him. “I’m uh, leaving for a few days. Don’t follow me.”

“Well now. I have better things to do than to chase after *you.”* Alastor places his chin in his hand, but he still looks rather curious. “Where exactly are you heading to?”

“Secret.”

Alastor’s deer ears flatten at this.

“Ah, yes. For your mysterious ‘preparations’.” He sounds a bit put-out. “Do you really need to go?”

“Why? You gonna miss me?” Lucifer jokes. Alastor stiffens at first, but then he rolls his eyes.

“On the contrary! I can finally have some much needed peace and quiet. I will relish your absence.”

“HAH, funny. I was gonna say the same about you.”

Lucifer stands up, and Alastor follows suit. Despite his bravado, he'll miss Alastor. He knows that he will. Time stills as they stare at each other, not moving, not speaking, and Lucifer knows that if he breaks the silence, he'll have to say good-bye.

Wait a… it's only for a little while. You're being stupid. Lucifer thinks. He swallows before speaking, albeit hesitantly.

"See you in a few?"

Alastor's smile dims.

"Well. I suppose I will be here."

Lucifer nods, and then flutters his wings, flying off into the distance. He looks back, and Alastor watches him from the roof. It's rather adorable, really; it kind of feels like Alastor is seeing him off.

After flying for a while, Lucifer drops down to the ground, choosing to walk the rest of the way. He's en-route, returning somewhere he hasn't been in a very, very long time:

His old mansion.

Lucifer spends the next few nights by himself.

Although it had been several months since he left, it's unsettling being here. His house is about as welcoming as a haunted graveyard, the ghosts of his memories weighing on his mind.

As he strolls through his bedroom, he can't help but gaze at the framed photos of him, Charlie and…

Lilith.

He pauses at a picture of the three of them, and places his hand over her. She still commands so much attention, even in a photograph.

“I guess we really are taking our separate paths.” Lucifer murmurs. It had been a beautiful journey to be with her; an absolute privilege to know her. But as his eternal life moves forward, he’s ready to face whatever happens on his own.

He eventually retracts his hand from her image.

And Lucifer snaps his fingers, finally whisking the photos of Lilith away into storage.

(The ones of Charlie stay on the walls, though.)

Once he’s done, he looks at the empty walls with some mixed emotions. It looks exceedingly bare now, and the wallpaper is starting to chip off.

It’s fine, fine, fine, all fine! I can fill it with new pictures. Lucifer reassures himself.

He takes one last look at his room before teleporting to his garden, which is situated right behind his house. Calling it a ‘garden’ was rather generous; it was akin to a massive clearing with nothing but grass in it.

“Alright.” Lucifer takes a deep breath. “Let’s do this.”

He summons up KeeKee, and he crouches down to pet her, unable to resist. “Hewwo, KeeKee! Can you become the key, please?”

She transforms with a shake of her body. He picks up the giant key and makes a broad stroke in the air; in an instant, he materializes an old-fashioned building - red and black in colour - and he pushes the door open to check out the interior.

It’s quite cavernous on the inside, dimly lit by elegant chandeliers, and it’s mostly unfurnished. An intentional choice, because Alastor *(that arrogant ass,* Lucifer thinks) will probably change everything about it.

Still, he made sure to install two things:

1. A fully-stocked bar on the side
2. A large wooden platform at the front with an assortment of instruments, including a grand piano

He can’t help but beam at the result. “TA-DA! His own private jazz club! Now he can play music and dance without anyone bothering him.”

Lucifer’s voice echoes in the room, *him-him-him-him…* and he’s pleased with how the acoustics sound. Alastor seems to prefer solitude at times, ducking away into his own radio tower when he needs to think. This way, he can have another secluded place to spend his time in.

But then Lucifer gets nervous.

Is this too much? Maybe it’s too much. He shakes his head, *no, he’ll like it,* before getting all worried again, *or will he -*

“ARGH!” Lucifer huffs and climbs onto the platform, deciding not to second-guess himself. “Okay. Time for part two.”

He brings up his violin, which had been the *real* reason why he left the hotel.

To compose a song for Alastor.

Music had been the first thing they agreed upon; music had been there when it was too hard to speak. So it felt fitting, in a way, that music would bring them together one more time.

He busies himself with music composition for the rest of the day, jotting down notes on a piece of sheet music. Lucifer specifically incorporates complex chords - a rich melody - a swing rhythm, and despite the fact that the violin isn’t a traditional choice for jazz, he’s always had a predilection for string instruments.

It sounds very pretty, but…

It’s missing something, he thinks, frowning to himself. *I don’t know what, though.*

Oh well. He’ll figure it out eventually.

Lucifer jumps off from the platform and makes his way outside. When he reaches the entrance of his mansion, he sits down on the front steps. Being on his own at home used to fill him with ennui, but now?

He’s kind of excited - *really* excited - he’s grinning like an idiot, because it’ll be his first time bringing Alastor over to his place.

“That guy…”

Lucifer touches his hair, where he had slid red hair pins to keep it in place. It’s the ones that Alastor had made for him on casino night, and he has them arranged back into an X-shape. They’ve been in his hair for the past couple of days, because.

Lucifer longs to see him.

Okay?

He hasn’t seen Alastor’s stupid face in a while, and to go from almost-every-single-day to no-days-at-all has really made him crave his rudeness. He even misses Alastor’s barbed insults, the way it’s always accompanied by a teasing smirk and a glint in his eye.

Lucifer lets out a sigh. Well. He’s almost done planning his confession. Once he figures out what’s wrong with his song, he’ll -

A brilliant flash of light distracts him, and Lucifer looks over, a bit on guard. It’s large; golden; divine; it can be no one else but…

Sera.

She peeks her head through the portal, clearly uncomfortable, and her dark blue eyes sweep the perimeters before landing on him.

“Hello, Lucifer. I’m glad to have caught you by yourself.” She steps out from the portal, towering over him as per usual. “I have something to ask of you.”

He blinks at this. “Uh…huh. Kinda rare to see you down here. What’s up?”

“Well.” She wavers, her voice uncharacteristically skittish. “Would you be able to come up for a little bit?”

“Is it gonna take long, or…?”

“It really depends on you. I’m afraid it’s rather serious.”

“A *serious* issue?” Lucifer gawks. It must be important, considering that she came all the way down here. “Hold on, let me just tell them.”

He pulls out his phone, and his hands hover over his screen unsurely. He wants to let Alastor know, but he’s faced with the realization that he has no way to contact him. All these months spent together, and they’ve never once messaged each other. Normally, Alastor would teleport to him, or vice-versa.

In the end, Lucifer texts Charlie, but he’s too distracted to type, hitting **SEND** without double-checking. The last time he had a private meeting in Heaven, he had been banished to Hell. So what could she possibly want?

“Alright, done! Let’s go.”

Sera pulls him into the portal by his arm; as he tries to keep up with her pace, his phone slips out of his pocket and drops behind him.

He doesn’t notice, and the portal flickers shut.

The worst morning of Alastor’s life starts with the deepest aching.

Something is wrong - terribly so - and it hurts, right in his chest.

Alastor stands in front of the mirror, trying to puzzle out what the issue is. He had taken his shirt off to look at the jagged scar across his abdomen. It's the wound given to him from Adam, just the faintest impression; Lucifer had healed the worst of it, but it's still a bit raised.

He touches it gingerly, thinking that it might be the culprit, but…

It's not painful. Not at all.

Alastor squints at the mirror. What could be causing this sense of unease, then? It's incredibly foreboding, a dark cloud that engulfs his mind. As though it were a premonition.

"Hmm. How peculiar."

No matter. It will go away in due course. He has other things to be concerned about; namely, whatever antics Lucifer is up to. They haven't seen each other due to his befuddling 'preparations,' but surely it's fine to go look for him now?

Since he has pulled a disappearing act from the hotel, Alastor thinks, *I will seek out Charlie to try and contact him.*

After settling on his plan of action, Alastor puts on a freshly-ironed shirt - leaves behind his overcoat, draped on his chair - and snaps his suspenders in place. He takes a second to brush down his hair but then stops immediately, mortified by his actions.

How is it possible that he's fussing about his appearance for someone *else?*

"You've become a fool." Alastor says sternly to his reflection.

But he teleports to Charlie anyway.

She's in the middle of distributing fliers with Vaggie when Alastor appears.

"Charlie, my dear! How goes your misguided attempt at recruitment?"

"Oh, Alastor! Hey!" Charlie waves at him. "Are you here to help?"

“No!” Alastor says, sounding much too gleeful. “I require your electronic correspondence.”

“My - ” Charlie scrunches her eyebrows, before understanding. “Oh, my phone? Why?”

Alastor averts his gaze, and she has a hard time reading his expression. He seems thoughtful, maybe. Or calculating? It’s always been hard to nail down what he’s thinking.

“Your father and I have some unfinished business to attend to.” Alastor says cryptically. “Ring him for me.”

Charlie blinks at this. She wants clarification on *what unfinished business?* but she knows better than to push. “Um… I guess I can. One sec.”

She pulls out her phone and taps his contact. Unfortunately, it goes straight to voicemail.

“Huh. That’s weird.”

“What is?” Alastor presses.

“He didn’t answer. He always picks up the phone when I call him.” Charlie scrolls through her phone, and then spots a message notification. “Oh, wait! Dad texted me.”

Both Vaggie and Alastor lean over her shoulder to read it:

Dad
> WITTY SEA BE RUTH BOOK

They all stare at the message for a while. Alastor squints at it, looking lost.

“And what is this lingo?”

“I think it’s autocorrect, actually.” Charlie puts her phone away. “Um, maybe he’s at home? I’ll go look for him.”

“At the hotel?” Vaggie asks.

“No, not there. The place where I grew up.” Charlie hands the fliers over to Vaggie. “I’ll be right back! Can you hand these out for me, Vaggie? And Alastor, why don’t you check the hotel in the meantime? Maybe he’s finally back.”

“If I must.”

Alastor sounds blasé, but he does shift away in a hurry.

Her dad's bedroom looks a little different.

Still, Charlie feels painfully wistful; he used to make her magical toys and beautiful illusions in this very room. As she walks through his space, she bumps into a pile of rubber ducks and accidentally starts an avalanche,

(squeak

squeak

squeak

squeak

squeak).

"Whoops! S - sorry!" Charlie picks up as many as she can, and tries to balance them atop of each other. She has no idea how her dad managed to make them stay up in the first place. After they're mostly organized, she glances at the photos on the wall.

They're mostly framed pictures of her and, *oh god, is that me during my emo phase? WHY?*

But the most obvious difference -

the first thing that she noticed -

is that the pictures of her mom are gone.

Charlie puts a hand on the walls, inspecting the frame marks that were left behind.

I guess dad's really moved on, she thinks. *But… that's fine. I'll protect mom's legacy here. And besides, he should do what makes him happy.*

He had spent all those years by himself, and during that time, Charlie had barely contacted him. She had no idea what he was doing, but it couldn't have been all that fun being on his own.

"He's so energetic now, though." Charlie says thoughtfully. "Him and Alastor are always fighting, and yelling… laughing… hanging out…"

She trails off. Reflects on the amusement park. Her dad had been strangely insistent on spending time with Alastor; similarly, Alastor had been oddly accommodating, even following after him when he left.

So is it… are they…

Charlie's thoughts drift over to Angel Dust. She still hasn't met up with him yet, and she's super curious about what kind of findings he unearthed.

"Okay! Note to self, talk to Angel Dust when I go back."

Charlie exits the mansion from the front door when she doesn't see her dad anywhere. As she's about to return home, she sees something shiny on the stairs.

It's her dad's phone, face-down so that she can't see his lock screen. He'll want it when he's back; she pockets it, and starts heading towards the hotel.

Alastor teleports to Lucifer's room.

It's clear that it hasn't been occupied for a while, based on how pristine it looks. Alastor wanders over to the desk with all of his personal items on it. It's grown quite a bit since he last laid eyes on the collection, and it now includes a strange piece of red cloth.

When he picks it up, he realizes it's from his own overcoat. He had wrapped up Lucifer's wound with it, back in Heaven.

"You would keep junk like this? For what purpose?" Alastor mutters, perplexed. The scrap had even been washed and folded neatly. He sets it back down in its original position before exiting, still searching for Lucifer.

He checks the bar.

His radio tower.

The roof.

The music room.

After he examines the hotel inside and out, he sits down in the parlour, his mind going a mile a minute.

So he is not in the hotel, Alastor thinks, lacing his fingers together. *How irritating.*

“Alastor!” Charlie calls out. She makes her way over, and sits down beside him on the couch. “Dad wasn’t at our old place. Was he here?”

Alastor shakes his head, and she lets out a sigh. “That’s weird. Well, I did find his phone. Why don’t you hold onto it?”

“And what am I supposed to do with this gadgetry?”

“I’m a little worried, so let’s split up to look for him. You don’t have a phone, right, Alastor? Just use dad’s for now; I’ll contact you if I find anything, and you can give it back to him when you meet up.” She hands it to him, phone screen facing downwards. He wrinkles his nose at the device, but ends up accepting.

“I’ll check out the right side of the city, and Alastor, you take the left side? Text me if you need anything.”

“Texting?” Alastor balks. “I think not.”

“It’s easy! All you have to do is - ”

He disappears before she can finish explaining.

Alastor stands atop the highest point in Hell: the roof of the Heaven Embassy. He peers over the entirety of the city, trying to think of the most efficient way to scour the premises.

After some thought, he summons up his little creatures. They emerge from shadow, awaiting his orders.

“Go look for Lucifer,” Alastor gestures with his radio cane, “and leave no stone unturned. He is rather small, after all.”

They nod and slither away in the blink of an eye. Alastor paces across the roof; although he can just let his minions search in his place, he’s far too antsy to just sit still.

Where could he be? Perhaps he’s visiting Rosie or Mimzy?

There's the slimmest chance that Lucifer would go see them, but they *have* spent quite a bit of time there, performing at Mimzy's club, running errands at Rosie's Emporium. It couldn't hurt to check.

"You are more trouble than you are worth." Alastor sighs out.

Yet he still rushes to go find them.

When he teleports to Rosie, he emerges right between her and a customer. The patron yelps at the intrusion, but Rosie simply swivels her head to look at him.

"Alastor! How've you been, dearie?"

"Rosie! Unfortunately, I don't have time for pleasantries today." Alastor leans on his radio cane. "Have you seen Lucifer?"

"Lucifer?" Rosie says thoughtfully. "I haven't seen him since the amusement park. Is something wrong?"

"Only time will tell!"

Alastor morphs into shadow without saying goodbye.

He pops up behind Mimzy's bar, which makes her scream at his presence. After a few seconds, Mimzy places a hand on her chest to calm herself down.

“ALASTOR! You frightened me!”

“Mimzy, sweetheart.” He doesn’t bother apologizing, and goes straight to the point. “Has Lucifer dropped by?”

She huffs from annoyance, but she still answers his question. “Y’know, it’s been a long, long time since we’ve met. He doesn’t normally come to this part of town. Speakin’ of, Alastor, do you two wanna - ”

Alastor vanishes before she even finishes her sentence.

He stands in an alleyway to catch his breath, and he props himself up against the wall. Although he has a near-limitless amount of stamina, travelling all over the city in such a short duration is starting to take its toll.

When he glances around the corner, he spies the neon sign of the **CONSENT CLUB.** He peeks his head out a bit further; it’s rather nostalgic to see the building again. The entire hotel had gone there for one of Charlie’s tasteless ‘bonding’ excursions, but he and Lucifer had slipped out at the time.

It’s then that he realizes he’s standing in the same alleyway from back then. He looks down at the curb, where they had sat together afterwards. Alastor touches his own bowtie at the memory, and then drops his hand.

In the corner of his eye, he sees his shadow beings slowly slithering back. Alastor places his hands on his radio cane, looking down at them expectantly.

“Well? Did you locate him?”

They give him absolutely nothing to work with, only shaking their heads. At this, Alastor tries to run through potential ideas of where Lucifer could be, but his mind is an absolute, jumbled up mess:

Lucifer is -

not here? where -

didn't -

why didn't he say -

is he -

harmed? -

or -

A buzzing sound distracts him from his thoughts. It's coming from his pocket, and Alastor pats it with some alarm until he discovers it's just Lucifer's phone. When he pulls it out, he sees that Charlie had 'texted' him.

Whatever *that* means.

DAUGHTER!
> nothing here, Al. you?

But he's more distracted by the lock screen picture, because -

it's -

a picture of -

of them. Alastor, and Lucifer. Together. On the ferris wheel.

His mind fully grinds to a halt; he can't compute what he's looking at. *Interesting. Now, why would he…*

But he knows why. Of course he knows the reason. Alastor has had an inkling for a while, but it just cements the possibility that his ~~affections may be returned~~

that his ~~feelings are reciprocated~~

Alastor can't find a good replacement for the sentence. It's all terribly sappy, and he lets out a harrumph, annoyed that *this* is what he's turned into.

It appears that you have poisoned my mind, Alastor thinks. *I will definitely exact my revenge.*

He peers down at Charlie's message with no intention of responding, but then the phone continues to buzz:

DAUGHTER!
> you there?
> Alastor?
> you're not lost, are you?
> Alastor plsssssss tell me you're ok?

She’s being incredibly irksome. Alastor would normally just snap the phone in half, but Lucifer would probably want it back. A pity.

He manages to send a text back, his fingers fumbling over the keyboard.

Lucifer
> *nttyubf hrte*

Alastor’s eye twitches. It’s hard to click on these tiny icons with his large hands.

“Charlie will understand.” He decides, not wanting to bother with it anymore. He puts the phone back into his pocket, takes in a deep breath, and steels his resolve.

He has to do something that he has never, ever wanted to do.

He teleports to the V Tower.

Vox is in his surveillance room, paying close attention to the blinking monitors. When Alastor looks at the screens, he sees his own face appear in a number of them, perpetually a pixelated mess.

“You really need a better hobby.” Alastor says dryly. Vox turns his head, and he doesn’t seem all that surprised to see him - his cameras must have already picked him up.

“The fuck do you want?”

“Vox, old pal.” He smiles insincerely. “How are you today?”

“Oh, like you give a shit.” Vox bites back. “What the hell is your ass doing here, anyway?”

“Your manner of speaking leaves much to be desired, as usual.” Alastor squints at him. “I am here for your surveillance!”

“Why?” Vox raises an eyebrow.

“I don’t owe *you* any sort of explanation.”

“Oh yeah? Fuck off, then.”

Alastor's shadow leaps out from irritation; his voice mutates into a lowered register, staticky and threatening. "Let me make this clear. You will show me unless you want me to *end* your *fucking life."*

"Oh, I DON'T THINK SO!" Vox jumps out from his seat, a scowl on his face. "You're not gonna do shit, because you want to find someone, don't you? And since you've been running around, looking for *Lucifer* all day, it's obvious that you're on the hunt for your BOYFRIEND!"

Alastor reels his head back at the word 'boyfriend,' his smile frozen on his face.

"You have our relationship incorrect." He manages to say.

"Wait - you're not dating?" Vox looks surprised, but then his expression twists into a cruel smirk. "Holy shit! I get it now. You want his ass *so* bad, but you can't have it. Ohhhhh, fuck. That's fucking hilarious!"

Alastor's tentacles dart out menacingly, his eyes full of barely-contained fury. "If you continue to spout such drivel, I will rip that foul television *right off* your neck."

"What a shitty way to ask for help." Vox sits down on his table, his back towards his monitors. "Fine, fine. I'll tell you where he is. I saw him earlier today."

Alastor perks up at this. "Good."

"But only if you do something for me."

"Less good."

Vox cackles, clearly enjoying this whole exchange. "I'll let you off easy. I'm launching a new product for VoxTek Enterprises soon. I wanna host the opening party at that stupid hotel you're living at."

Alastor grips onto his radio cane tightly, and his smile is mostly teeth at this point. "Hilarious. No!"

"Hey, hey, hey. Don't you mean yes?" Vox shrugs. "It doesn't affect me either way, though. You can fuck off for all I care. But I know exactly where he is. And just to tell you, it doesn't look good for him. I wouldn't wanna be in his shoes!"

Alastor's eyes fully transform into radio dials, ticking away slowly. "And what makes you think I can't just get rid of *you* to check myself?"

"Do it, then!" Vox spreads his arms out tauntingly. "But I'll make sure to blackout every single screen first."

Alastor gazes back at the monitors; he's not sure if Vox is making this up - saying that Lucifer is under duress - but he doesn't want to risk it. He retracts his tentacles, and he's already resigned to his vile fate at this point.

“Hmm.” Alastor heaves out a sigh. “So be it. I will submit your proposal to Charlie.”

Vox’s jaw drops. “Seriously? Oh my GOD! This is fucking great. Seeing you all pathetic is THE BEST!”

He starts to cackle, and it echoes in the chamber nastily. Vox wipes a tear away from his eye, still chuckling, and turns around to face his monitors. Alastor takes this as an invitation to come look as well.

Vox sifts through them briskly, the displays flickering at a rapid pace; after a while, he finds the one that he’s looking for. With a snap of his fingers, Vox zooms in on the screen that shows Lucifer being lead into a golden portal.

“See? He was taken by Heaven or some shit. Right there.”

Heaven. Of course. But what could they want with Lucifer, and only him? Alastor’s mind cycles through increasingly terrifying theories.

Did they imprison him? They had banished him last time, did they not? What else are they capable of doing?

Alastor glances at him from the corner of his eye. “You are useful occasionally, Vox. I won’t kill you today.”

“Whatever, fucker.” He scoffs. “I don’t ever want to see your face ever again.”

“Your surveillance says otherwise.” Alastor says wryly, pointing at the monitors. His face appears over and over again in distorted, pixelated masses, and Vox hastily turns every single display off.

“DON’T LOOK AT THAT!”

At the very least, Lucifer being in Heaven explains why he couldn’t locate him at all.

Alastor lingers in the meeting room at the Heaven Embassy, the stained glass windows drenching the walls in lilac hues. He looks at the spot where Lucifer had played his harp,

recalling the euphonious melody that drifted through the air, but he can't get distracted right now.

It's time to contact that little seraphim.

Alastor is capable of many things.

Unfortunately, going in and out of Heaven as he pleases is not one of them. Alastor impatiently taps his foot against the floor as he waits for the call the connect, and eventually, the blurry hologram of Emily takes shape.

She turns around in surprise, and when she realizes it's Alastor, she gives him a cheerful wave.

"Oh! Hi!"

"I require a portal." Alastor says in lieu of a greeting. Emily tilts her head in confusion.

"Did you forget something up here?"

"Ha-ha! Somewhat." He smiles coldly. "I believe I left a king up there."

"A king?" Emily puts her hand on her face, confused, before realization dawns on her. "Oh! Lucifer, right? Sera took him into a room, but I haven't seen either of them for hours."

"Did she now?" Alastor says bitingly. If Emily is taken aback by his acerbic tone, she doesn't show it.

"Well, if you want to pick him up, I'm sure that's fine! I just need a moment to get you a portal." She severs the connection, leaving Alastor by himself in the large, empty building.

Alastor stands with his hands on his radio cane, and he waits,

and waits,

and…

waits.

Chapter End Notes

The next chapter is gonna be really important! I won't update next week because I need extra time to write it + it'll be a longer one. So I'll be back Friday, July 19. Mark your calendars <3 The chapter title will be "The Deal (Not A Deal)." Can you guess what happens? Leave your theories in the comments!!

Fun Facts:
- I used my phone to type "WITH SERA BE BACK SOON" to see what similar autocorrect words came up, so yeah, that's how I wrote Lucifer's text LOL
- Also Alastor was trying to type "nothing here" but I was channeling "old people struggling to type on a tiny keyboard" energy
- Trust fall is from ch. 2
- Hair pins are from ch. 15/16
- "The next time Alastor surprises him, they'll fight" is from Ch. 15
- That scrap of cloth from Alastor's overcoat is from ch. 20
- The wound from Adam is ch. 4/5
- The bowtie game in the alleyway is from ch. 6
- Heaven embassy and the harp is from ch. 17

The Deal (Not A Deal)

Chapter Notes

CH. 25 FANART:
- drawn by @dirtgrubber: 1 + 2
- animatic by: @of-spaceships-and-cats
- drawn by: @clearpoolart
- drawn by: @twosoulss77
- drawn by: @myntesuniverse
- drawn by @grijannax: 1 + 2
- drawn by: @scarletpineapple

THANK YOU!!! Send me anything to my Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lucifer's not sure what to expect after stepping through the portal, but it certainly isn't *this*.

"What in the… did you prepare tea?" He asks, staring at the table in the centre of the room. There's a teapot with matching porcelain cups on the tabletop; nestled beside it is a three-tiered platter, piled high with dainty desserts.

"Yes. Please, have a seat."

Sera settles down onto her chair first, and after a moment, Lucifer follows suit. She pours the hot tea into each cup, the smell of darjeeling wafting in the air. He can't remember the last time they did something like this, and the silence is rather awkward. Or maybe he's overthinking it?

"Do you still take milk with your tea?" Sera asks stiffly. Her body language is quite rigid, like she's not sure what to do.

Okay, so it's not just him - it's definitely awkward.

"Y…yeah. I can't believe you remembered."

She conjures up a little jar of steamed milk, and pushes it towards him in lieu of speaking. They sip their tea quietly, and the only sound is the clinking of cutlery as Lucifer reaches for an apple danish.

Couldn't she have played some music in the background? Lucifer thinks, munching on his dessert. At any rate, the silence is about to suffocate him to death, and he searches for something to say.

“Is this your serious issue?” He smiles weakly. “You, uh, needed someone for afternoon tea?”

She either doesn’t notice or ignores his feeble attempt at a joke. “I will get straight to the point, then. You and your daughter came up to Heaven. But I think you had ulterior motives.”

Lucifer almost crushes the treat in his hands. *Shit - did she find out that we were lying?*

Although they had only entered Heaven to bring back Niffty, Sera followed rules to a tee, and she wouldn’t take kindly to the idea that they had deceived her. She entwines her fingers together, her eyes boring straight into his.

“I have spoken to numerous eyewitnesses. And all of them stated that you and Alastor were having…”

She pauses here, looking rather pained.

“A very public, and very intimate affair.”

Lucifer chokes on his tea - coughs wildly - momentarily forgetting that technically yes, that DID happen, but it had only been a sham/a pretence/a way to shake off the guards that Sera had assigned to them.

“Is this true?” She asks him, point-blank, and he sets his teacup down.

Okay, so she hasn’t found out. Stick to the excuse, stick to the excuse, stick to the excuse…

“Ha. HA-HA!” He attempts to laugh it off, but he sounds exceedingly unnatural. “Yeah, we sure did. We were doin’ it on every surface. Here, there, everywhere.”

Great. Now he’s trying too hard, and Sera just massages her temples. “I am not trying to police your behaviour, but… the last time you had a romantic entanglement, it had been a disaster. Lilith was a force to be reckoned with. She caused Hell’s powers to grow exponentially. So…”

“Wait.” Lucifer furrows his eyebrows. “What are you implying?”

“He is an overlord, is he not?” Sera asks carefully. “A formidable one, if I recall correctly. And the princess has inherited your powers, as well.”

All at once, it clicks in his head.

“You think we’re up to something? That the three of us are, what, gonna overthrow Heaven?”

“Your words, not mine.”

Lucifer bristles up at her accusation, because he knows what she’s hoping for. It would be so much easier for her if he were completely villainous - to paint him as the ultimate enemy - because that way, she can justify hurting him over and over again.

“Look, Sera.” He says hotly. “I know we’ve had our differences.”

“That is a bit of an understatement.”

“But I wasn’t here to stir up anything, alright? And there’s not a single rotten bone in Charlie’s body. She would never hurt souls for no reason. Anyway, now that I’m here, I wanna say something to YOU!”

He jabs a finger at her direction, and her eyes widen at the motion. “You were being *awful* to my daughter! She’s done so much for Hell. Seriously, she’s such a hard worker, and the others who live there right now? They’re good people. You don’t even know them, but you judge them immediately.”

“You do know that it’s part of my job.”

“Yeah, but you don’t have all the facts! You just sit here,” Lucifer has to take in a breath to calm himself down, “and jump to the worst conclusions. Like you always do.”

His words drape over them uncomfortably, the implication too heavy to ignore. She seems rather gobsmacked, and she sets her teacup down on the saucer.

“Then give me the facts.” Sera leans in from across the table, and her grey eyes are impossibly bright at this proximity. “You still haven’t told me what you were doing. You left with Alastor that day, instead of coming up to talk to me. Why is that?”

“You wanna know what we did?”

Well, that’s easy enough to talk about. He flips through the memories in his head like it’s a scrapbook, and he thinks about the past events in Heaven: eating ice cream, petting Alastor’s ears, climbing on top of him, seeing his flushed face…

What the fuck? Lucifer thinks, blushing furiously. They’ve done a ton of intimate things together, and he feels a delayed sense of embarrassment.

“I - ” his face is officially aflame, great, “Alastor and I,” he can’t maintain eye contact with her anymore, “like I mentioned earlier, we were, well. You know,” is he rambling? He’s definitely rambling, “it was just -”

“Never mind.” Sera lifts her hand up, and she looks like she regrets asking. “I understand now. It’s written all over your face.”

Lucifer blinks at this.

“Huh?”

“So you had me take care of your daughter while you went on a date.” She lets out a long-suffering sigh. "I must say, I feel rather used.”

“HUH?”

“I suppose that Hell doesn’t have that many romantic spots.” Sera mumbles under her breath. “Emily was right, then.”

She doesn't speak afterwards, instead choosing to chew on a scone. Lucifer recognizes the expression on her face; it's one of deliberation, and she's always preferred silence when she's pondering over something.

She finishes her scone,

refills the pot of milk,

pours some more tea for them,

before finally looking at him, a rueful smile on her face.

"I'm sorry, Lucifer."

He chokes on his tea, *again,* which is a sign that he should stop eating or drinking while they're talking. "What?"

"I'm sorry." Sera repeats, louder this time. "We've been apart for a while, and so I assumed that Hell would worsen your character in some way. But I was incorrect. A happy mistake, of course. You are still the unwavering dreamer."

"Oh." Never in a million years would he have expected Sera to admit fault. "I mean, I appreciate the apology, but it doesn't just, y'know, magically make everything okay."

"Of course. It is completely your choice. I only wanted to let you know." If she's put out by his refusal, she doesn't show it. Instead, she places a macaron on his plate.

A peace offering.

The seconds of silence turn into minutes, and the only sound is of them sipping their tea. Another moment where Sera looks rather deep in thought.

"And about your daughter." She finally says. "After meeting with her the past few times, she is… not what I expected."

Sera absentmindedly stirs her tea. "To be honest, the two of you have given me something to think about. Perhaps it is not so straightforward to separate the saints and sinners after all."

"REALLY?" Lucifer gapes at her, a bit astonished at her reaction. "Wait wait wait. Wait. Are you rethinking your decision - "

"I am not." She shuts him down immediately, but there's a friendly twinkle in her eye. "I do think her persistence is rather admirable. The last time we spoke, she was thinking about bringing in more guests to her hotel."

"Yeah! She's working day and night, trying to promote the hotel." He says affectionately.

"And how is it going so far?"

“Uh - there’s some buzz.” Lucifer omits that Charlie hasn’t been successful so far, because he doesn’t want to lose Sera’s interest.

“I see.”

She seems to be concentrating hard, and he pops the macaron into his mouth as she’s ruminating over this information.

“Well.” Sera begins. “It would only be prudent for us to observe your daughter’s project.”

“You’re not going to stop her, are you?”

“There is no point in that, now, is there? She’s as determined as you are, Lucifer. Like father, like daughter.” Sera says, not unkindly. “I’ll assign Emily as our liaison. Why don’t you update us if there’s any progress?”

“Oh, wow!” He can’t help but beam at this. “Charlie’s gonna be so excited! She’s wanted to work together for so long.”

Sera smiles back, the slightest quirk of her lips.

“It will be a deal, then.”

“A *deal?”*

Lucifer starts to snicker at the word, and she gazes at him curiously.

“Did I say something funny?”

“No, no.” He scratches his head sheepishly. “Not funny? Exactly? You just sounded like Alastor there. He’s always making deals and stuff.”

“Ah. Your lover.” At the word ‘lover,’ he feels his face flush again. “You seem to have quite the type, Lucifer. Tall and dangerous.”

And - god dammit, is Sera *teasing* him? She laughs a little, airy and delicate, and it’s a sound he hasn’t heard from her in a while.

The teapot is officially empty, and Lucifer is about to leave when an idea crosses his mind - a.k.a. an olive branch of sorts. He drums his fingers on the tabletop, a little hesitant.

“Actually, now that I’m here… I want your opinion on something.”

“Oh?” Sera looks at him, her eyes inquisitive. “Please, go on.”

Lucifer conjures up his violin, and it shines under the sparkling lights. “I made a song for Alastor. Can you listen to it? I think it’s missing a li’l something.”

Honestly, he doesn’t know why he hasn’t thought of this earlier. Sera is the perfect candidate to test his song on, because A) she’s always been musically talented and B) she already thinks he’s dating Alastor, so it’s quite likely that he would compose a song for him.

“Certainly." She nods at his request. "It has been a while since I heard you perform. I would be honoured to listen.”

He perks up once he gets her approval, and rests the violin on his collarbone. "Great! Alright, here it is."

In one smooth motion, he draws the bow across the strings. The melody reverberates exquisitely in the tearoom, the sound smooth and clear. Not a single note is amiss; he plays for a few minutes, and when he pulls the last tone, he looks at Sera expectantly.

“Whaddya think?”

“Quite beautiful, indeed.” She claps appreciatively. “But you are right - it’s missing something. Could I see your sheet music?”

“Mhm, mhm.”

He materializes the pages in his hands and passes them over to her.

“I think here…”

“Yeah?”

“And maybe here…” Sera marks down some parts with a pencil, and they spend the next few hours deep in melodic discussion, adjusting stanzas throughout. It’s nice to get a second opinion, and he practices the piece every time they make an alteration.

The evening slowly creeps in. The soft moonlight streams in through the windows; it’s a different colour from Hell - not red, but rather a silvery blue. It’s getting rather late, and so Lucifer sets the violin down.

I should probably head back now.

“It really is much better. Thanks!”

“One final note.” Sera looks at his violin thoughtfully. “You could consider having another instrument accompanying it. Perhaps a piano?”

“A piano?” An image of Alastor appears in his mind, jauntily playing away at the keyboard. “That’s… yeah, that’s a great idea. I’ll make an accompaniment.”

“Regardless, I’m sure your boyfriend will be thrilled.”

Lucifer can’t help but wheeze at the term.

Emily finally returns, her hologram a little blurry around the edges.

“Oh gosh, I didn’t mean to take so long! I had to fill out a ton of paperwork.” She explains. Alastor merely shrugs, uninterested about the intricacies of Heaven’s bureaucracy.

“Shall we head up, then?”

“Yep!” Emily says cheerfully. “Just a second.”

As she’s setting up the portal, Alastor looks down at Lucifer’s phone. The polite thing would be to inform Charlie about her father’s whereabouts. He squints at the screen, trying to figure out how to type on the tiny keyboard.

Lucifer
>gihgf to hracem

At least he managed to spell ‘to’ correctly. Alastor rolls his eyes and slips the phone back into his pocket; hopefully, this will be the last time he has to use this infernal rectangle.

A dazzling beam of light flashes to his left, and when he turns, he sees the golden portal glimmer in the air.

“Okay! This should take you to the entrance of the room. I need to do something else, so you’ll have to go by yourself.” Emily looks at him worriedly. “You won’t get lost, right?”

Alastor narrows his eyes at her, trying to discern if she’s being condescending, but her expression is one of open sincerity. It makes him rather uncomfortable, and he has to look

away. “Oh, I am perfectly capable of handling myself. Leave me be.”

“I believe in you!”

As her hologram disappears, Alastor gingerly steps through the portal. In an instant, he’s whisked away to a set of double doors, and they loom over him oppressively. His hand hovers over the golden handle, his concerns multiplying the longer he stands there.

Where does this lead to? Some sort of prison? A torture chamber? Alastor thinks, pinpricks of dread coursing through him. *What could they possibly need from him?*

Alastor shakes his head, trying to get rid of his agitation. There was no use in standing there and doing nothing. He places his hand on the doorknob, and pushes the door open.

The moment of truth.

He strides in, his footsteps echoing in the room. So it really *is* a prison - no, a torture chamber - no, a… tearoom?

Alastor looks around in confusion. The room is sumptuously decorated, with celestial ornamentations and a sparkling chandelier. The only alarming thing about it was the tacky furniture. Did Emily send him to the wrong area?

He’s about to exit when he spies a familiar figure at the centre, and he freezes in place. The person has flaxen hair; a pale countenance; a slim physique that hides the unexpected power within his body.

“Lucifer.”

He speaks it softly in the air, just a whisper in the wind. But it’s enough for him to turn around in his chair, to lock eyes with him, to visibly brighten up and shoot Alastor a lopsided grin.

“Woah!” Lucifer’s voice is tinged with excitement, like he’s delighted to see him. “What’re you doing here?”

“Oh, I was unfortunately tasked to babysit royalty today. So I am picking you up.”

Externally, Alastor is perfectly composed.

Internally, he can feel his muscles unlocking from relief, now that he knows there’s nothing awry. Lucifer watches interestedly as Alastor ventures forward,

step-by-step-by-step,

and their gazes never drop from each other.

“Where’s my ride, then?” Lucifer lifts an eyebrow.

“You have wings, don’t you?”

“Wow. Remind me to fire you.”

“Oh? I can assure you that no one else will take up this responsibility!”

Alastor makes it to the table, and, upon seeing Sera seated across from Lucifer, he can’t help but let out a huff.

“What’s this now? Teatime with the seraphim?” Alastor’s tone is purposefully blithe, although Sera seems to pick up on his annoyance.

“I asked him up here.” She snaps her fingers, and materializes a chair for him. “Please, sit.”

Alastor considers being contrary, but as Lucifer is still seated, he ends up sitting down beside him. A teacup appears out of nowhere, which he doesn’t touch; he’s really only here for one thing only.

It’s been a while since they’ve met, and he can’t help but stare, taking in the sight of his profile. Lucifer’s dressed exceedingly casually, only in a matching set of white pants and a button-up shirt. His sleeves are rolled up, as always, exposing his ombré arms, and his dark fingers are wrapped around a teacup.

“So, uh… do you come here often?” Lucifer grins, clearly amused by his own cheesy line.

“Oh, only when you are around.”

He’s merely stating a fact. But he feels like he’s made a misstep, based on the way Lucifer gapes at him. Alastor places his hand on his neck, resolutely looking away from him.

The consequence of that action, however, is that he accidentally makes eye contact with Sera.

“What do *you* want.” He grits out. She looks away immediately, but he can hear a small chuckle escape from her mouth. It’s a strange atmosphere, and Alastor can feel his heart thudding against the confines of his chest.

Nerves. Anxiety. All emotions he’s uncomfortable with.

To ease himself, he slides back into something he’s familiar with:

insulting Lucifer.

“I have never met anyone who gets under my skin like you.” Alastor leans in, genuine vexation seeping into his voice. “You should inform people if you are leaving. How ill-mannered!”

To emphasize his point, he flicks Lucifer’s forehead, and he yelps at the contact.

“I texted Charlie, jackass!”

“Are you speaking of this?” Alastor shoves his phone screen in front of his face, and Lucifer squints at the message.

“What the… is that what I wrote?” At least he has the decency to look abashed. “Oops.”

“Oops?” Alastor echoes. “Is that all you have to say?”

“I mean, I would have told you, but you don’t have a phone.”

“And how is your lack of social decorum my fault?”

“Get one of those retro phones, at least!” Lucifer makes a circle with his hands. “The rotary one!”

“Hmm. I should tear you in half to teach you a lesson.” Alastor throws his phone at him, and Lucifer scrambles to grab it, grumbling the whole time.

“You are such a douchebag.”

“Better than a scatterbrain, such as yourself.”

“Narcissist.”

“Airhead.”

“Asshole.”

“Lucifer.” Sera cuts in. Alastor glances askance at her, irritated by her interruption.

“Do you mind?” He plasters on a disingenuous smile. “We are in the middle of something.”

“You are the one who barged in.” Sera says dryly. “I only wished to inform you that there’s a special event tonight.”

Lucifer tilts his head. “What special event?”

“It’s the eve of the super moon.” She nods towards the window. “You can get a beautiful view up on the roof. Perhaps you’d like to see it before you go down? I can assure you that no one will bother you.”

“The moon, you say?”

Alastor reflects on the idea. It’s not a terrible suggestion; he’s always had ~~a penchant for stargazing~~

Incorrect. It was a pastime that he’s only taken up after spending time with Lucifer. They look at each other, communicating wordlessly.

Wanna see it? Lucifer’s face seems to say, and Alastor’s deer ears perk up.

Of course. Why break tradition?

They make it up to the roof at dusk. He's about to sit down on the tiles when Lucifer stops him with his apple cane, a mischievous grin on his face.

"I got a better idea."

And then, shockingly, he grabs hold of some of the fluffy clouds that float around them. He shuffles them around, squishing the clouds together until they form a large, bench-like shape.

"Ta-da!" Lucifer says proudly. "These are rea-lly comfy. Try it!"

To demonstrate, he jumps onto the cloud. Lucifer pats the space beside him, and Alastor looks at the makeshift seat incredulously.

"How strange. These things can be adjusted?"

"Yeah, but you're really not supposed to." Lucifer puts a finger on his lips. "Shh. Don't tell."

They don't appear to be sturdy whatsoever, so Alastor carefully pokes the surface. After determining that the clouds remain intact, he settles down next to Lucifer, but…

there's an annoying gap between them. A couple of centimetres. Not much at all, really, yet a great deal at the same time. Alastor turns to look at him, unsure of how to express his displeasure.

~~*Come closer?*~~

~~*Move in?*~~

"What?" Lucifer blinks. "Do you want more space - "

"No."

His reply is too swift. Too zealous. Alastor's deer ears flatten, and he is, once again, appalled by his actions. This was entirely unlike him - and yet, it *has* become his new normal, hasn't it? To get as close to Lucifer as possible?

"Oh."

Every now and then, Lucifer manages to read his mind. Because:

He shuffles in, just a little.

And in response:

Alastor inches closer, the tiniest bit.

“Better?” Lucifer asks, voice hushed. Alastor doesn’t reply - which he takes as a sign of approval, it seems, because they remain like that, pressed against each other. Lucifer turns away and gestures towards the moon, looking a bit in awe.

“She wasn’t kidding about the ‘super’ moon, huh? Look at that size!”

The moon glows so brightly it almost feels like the day, and its radiance drenches the landscape of Heaven in pearly tones. The moonlight reflects off of something in Lucifer’s hair; Alastor squints at it, trying to figure out what it is.

They’re -

pins?

Red ones, arranged in an X-shape. He recognizes them, of course, but… he had made those for him, eons ago.

Alastor taps on the pins with his hand. Lucifer looks at him when he does, his eyes impossibly wide. His gold sclera looks almost silver under the light.

“You kept these.”

Lucifer looks sheepish, a blush starting to form across his face.

“Well, yeah. You gave them to me. So they’re mine now.” He then sticks his tongue out, and Alastor’s eyes flick to its forked tip. “You can’t have them back!”

“Oh, I wouldn’t dream of it.” He mocks. “Your hair needs all the help it can get!”

“Not everyone can have straight hair like yours.” Lucifer grumbles, and -

without warning -

he runs his hand through Alastor’s strands, and twirls a lock around his finger. Casually. Like it’s something that they do. He digs his claws into his palms, fighting against the contrasting urges of either leaning in or leaning back, but Lucifer lets go of his hair before he can decide.

“See?” He sounds rather envious. “Soft.”

Alastor unclenches his hands, still staring. He remains at a loss for words; Lucifer starts to look uncomfortable, and he motions to Alastor’s outfit. “That, uh. You… no jacket today?”

Alastor pulls at his suspenders, and Lucifer's eyes follow the motion. He can't quite admit that he only set his jacket aside because he commented on it, back at the amusement park.

"It's kinda hot," Lucifer had said.

You are an embarrassment, he reprimands himself, *an embarrassment an embarrassment an embarrassment an embarrassment an embarrassment-*

"You spent quite some time up here." He says instead. "What were you up to?"

"Oh. Yeah. She had some questions about us. She was worried we were gonna invade Heaven or something."

Alastor feels a little offended by the insinuation. "Is that so? I have no interest in this ridiculous realm."

"I know!" Lucifer gesticulates wildly. "I told her that!"

"Is that why you stayed here for so long?"

There's an accusing edge to his voice, and Alastor tries desperately to control it, to smooth it back to normal. "Charlie was *incredibly* concerned by your vague text."

Lucifer pulls his phone out, worriedly swiping through his messages. "Oh god! I didn't mean to scare her - wait."

He peers at the screen.

"Did someone use my phone to text my daughter? There's a string of gibberish here."

Alastor stiffens up at the question, which Lucifer (unfortunately) notices.

"Don't tell me…" and he snorts, "is this you? YOU were the one texting Charlie? How are you *this* bad at typing?"

"Big words coming from *you."* Alastor sneers. "What did you text Charlie earlier? 'Witty sea be ruth book', I believe?"

"HEY! That was by accident! But these texts?" Lucifer laughs so hard he practically doubles over. "Oh god! You had so many typos that autocorrect couldn't even - couldn't even help!"

"Oh, your keyboard is far too small! We have established our size difference already."

Lucifer wipes a tear away from his eye, still laughing. "I thought you'd have more dexterity than that. Don't you play the piano?"

"I doubt musical talent is transferable to this," Alastor waves a hand, *"texting* business."

"Wanna learn?"

He fixes Lucifer with a look. "You already know my answer."

“Yeah.” He slips his phone into his pocket before letting out a sigh, soft and resigned. “Guess we won’t be able to contact each other, then.”

His voice is rather forlorn. Alastor leans down, struck with the ridiculous desire to soothe him. “Well! All you have to do is say my name. Call for me, and I will be there.”

“What - I just gotta say ‘Alastor’, and you’ll hear me, somehow?” There’s a wry grin on his face. “How does that even work?”

“I do have excellent hearing, after all.”

“O-kay, weirdo. I’ll hold you to that.” Lucifer looks away, a little subdued. “Anyway, I know I was here for a while. I spent most of my time… well…”

He trails off.

Gives up on finishing his sentence.

They lapse into silence, and Alastor stares up at the night sky, feigning indifference. But he’s unable to maintain the ruse for long, wanting to know what grandiose reason forced Lucifer up for so long.

“Well, what?”

Lucifer looks conflicted. “Uh… you know how I’ve been away from the hotel?”

“Indeed. For your preparations.”

“Yeah.” There’s a flicker of frustration on his face now. “It’s just - I spent alllll this time, trying to figure out how to ask… you… perfectly, and I just wanna do it *now,* but I gotta - this isn’t how I wanted it to go.”

“Oh?” His vague statement stirs Alastor’s interest. “And what did you want to ask?”

He glances over, and his eyes flit down towards Alastor’s mouth.

“I…”

Lucifer swallows, his face tinted pink,

“towards you…”

Alastor feels his heartbeat quicken,

“I want - ”

Lucifer leans in, expression hopeful, and then,

“N… never mind.” He says hastily, like he’s second-guessing himself. “I don’t - I’m kind of - I don’t want to make a wrong move.”

Alastor doesn't react at first, too surprised by the turn of events.

But then Lucifer backs away

no

looks rather disappointed

No

starts to get off the bench

NO

and Alastor lunges for his hand - grabs onto his palm - slides their fingers together and intertwines them. Lucifer's gaze swings between their joined hands and his face.

"Then allow me to go first," Alastor says, and he tightens his grip on Lucifer's hand.

He's reacting purely on instinct; he has nothing prepared to say. Throughout his life, he's been able to fabricate sentences and excuses on the fly, always with a quick response on his tongue, but in front of Lucifer -

in front of his own feelings -

his thoughts are an illegible mess. All he knows is that he needs to get it out *now,*

now

now

now

now

lest his heart bursts from all his bottled up emotions.

"You have - put some sort of hex on me, I…" His sentences come out in staccato bursts, confusing, messy, the complete opposite of how he normally is. "I want to be the very air you breathe. You are - a necessity, a -"

Alastor growls; drops Lucifer's hand like it burns, and shoves his face into his palm. It's all terribly embarrassing, and he's babbling like an incoherent fool. He peeks out from behind his fingers, only to find that Lucifer is staring at him, deeply-intensely-passionately, as though he were the only person in the universe.

He raises his head, hating every second of it. Hates that he can feel how hot and flushed his cheeks are. Hates that his heart is speeding by at an alarming rate. Hates that he's absolutely, indubitably,

terrified,

yet he still carries on, words coming out hurriedly, radio filter nonexistent.

“I have never wanted to be somebody’s someone.”

Alastor meets his eyes, red into gold.

“Until I met you.”

He waits, heart in his throat, for his response.

Was that clear enough? Does he understand what I’m trying to say?

Lucifer stands in front of him, and for a moment, he doesn’t speak at all. The longer he remains quiet, the more Alastor feels a debilitating sense of despair. That perhaps this, all of this, was a mistake. The worst one he’s made so far.

Alastor lowers his head, suddenly unable to bear looking at him. *What was I even thinking? No. I wasn’t thinking. And I have made this foolhardy decision, like some soppy imbecile -*

then Lucifer places a finger under his chin, gently lifts his face up,

and

everything is different.

He can feel it, practically tangible in the air. That there’s a line, but it’s up to Alastor if he wants to cross it and he throws caution to the wind, *yes yes yes,* so when Lucifer leans in, he follows suit, Alastor’s hand grabbing onto his tiny waist.

They press their foreheads against each other, and Alastor doesn’t dare breathe, feeling as Lucifer’s hand shifts to cradle his cheek.

Lucifer's every move is so tender. Cautious. His eyes glance down at Alastor’s lips before gazing back at his face, as though asking for permission.

And Alastor closes the distance, pressing his lips on his.

It’s a hesitant attempt, the gentlest brush. But Lucifer’s lips are soft, the contact so electrifying it jolts all the way through his body, and more than anything,

it feels good. It feels right.

The exact words Lucifer used to describe their relationship, back when they played the harp.

Alastor places both hands on his waist now, and he kisses a little more urgently, a little more recklessly, and Lucifer lets out a small noise that makes him lose all sense of self-control - *fuck -*

Alastor pulls him in eagerly, yanking so hard he practically drags him onto his lap; Lucifer places both hands onto the back of Alastor's head to bring him closer; they both greedily grab

onto each other, trying to feel more,

taste more,

he can’t get enough of him - just like everything else about Lucifer - and he takes and takes and takes.

They kiss to wring out all the words unsaid, and the world transforms.

Lucifer really doesn’t want to break the kiss. He can do this forever, no exaggeration, but he feels like he should properly respond to Alastor’s confession.

When he finally pulls away, Alastor’s eyes slowly open. Lucifer is still sitting on his lap, and he shoots him a lopsided grin.

“This might be obvious, but I like you too.”

Alastor lets out a breathy chuckle, low and amused.

“I don’t believe I said I *liked* you.” Alastor says, but he tucks Lucifer’s hair behind his ear, trying to tame the flyaways.

“You do, though.”

“Hmm?”

“You like me.” Lucifer teases, smiling widely.

Alastor rolls his eyes, but he doesn’t deny it.

Instead, he pushes Lucifer into his chest, trying to shut him up.

The moon is bright and beautiful tonight.

Lucifer used to hate seeing it in Heaven, but now it's quite the sight to behold.

They're back to sitting side-by-side. There's a small distance between them now, with Lucifer's hand placed in the space between them. Although, Alastor is aware that if he set his hand atop of his, it would be perfectly acceptable.

There's something satisfying about the knowing, the security that whatever he chooses to do now, Lucifer will reciprocate. But.

It's all so… *new.*

He's not one to care about any of - this. He's never felt anything like it before, the draw to be near, to simply be beside each other. Never been interested. Never *wanted* to be interested. But now, his lack of personal experience frustrates him, nauseating him to his core.

"Lucifer."

He turns to look at Alastor worriedly, as though picking up on the anxiety in his voice. "Yeah?"

"I would like to keep this between us. For now." Alastor adds hurriedly. "This is… not… what I'm accustomed to."

It all comes out like pulling teeth, and he's wildly uncomfortable even admitting this much. He grips onto the edge of the cloud, threatening to tear it apart, and he feels the same sensation as when he first informed Lucifer that he didn't like physical contact. Back when they initially struck a deal.

This must annoy him, Alastor thinks, *to hide from others like this.* He glances at him, trying to detect signs of disappointment.

Except, Lucifer merely nods. “Oh. Sure. Works for me.”

He feels rather dumbstruck by his (non)reaction.

“Is that all?” Alastor says incredulously. “You do not have any further questions, or concerns?”

“I mean, I get where you’re coming from.” Lucifer shrugs, looking unbothered. “It’s our business, right? No one else’s.”

“I suppose.” He squints at him. “You are taking this much better than I would have anticipated.”

“Did you think I’d argue with you about it?”

“We *always* argue, don’t we?”

“But it’s fun.” Lucifer looks unsure now. “Isn’t it?”

“You should know that I only do things I want to do.” Alastor notes, with some satisfaction, that Lucifer looks comforted by this. “I am still a bit perplexed by your reaction. You don’t mind?”

“No, I don’t - wait.” He leans in. “Y’know what? *Yeah,* I mind.”

“Oh.” Alastor says, a little subdued. Lucifer flashes a smirk, looking absolutely devilish.

“So, let’s make a deal.”

What in the - Alastor’s eyes practically bulge out at his words -

“We’ll keep this a secret if we *kiss* everyday.” Lucifer’s grin grows wider and wider and wider. “No killing, no maiming, no questions asked.”

Alastor can feel his face burn, and he slaps his hand over his face to cover it. *“Fuck* you,” he manages to say, and Lucifer just laughs, looking absolutely pleased with himself.

“Sure. When?”

His cheeky response makes Alastor’s blush worsen, and he has no idea where to look at this point. In the corner of his eye, he can see Lucifer’s smile falter.

“Uh.” His voice lowers to a gentle register. “It’s okay to say no.”

“Do not misunderstand.” Alastor forces out. “I am capable - I *would like* to do this. And besides, I do take my deals seriously.”

And then he arches an eyebrow.

“Don’t you normally say ‘not a deal’ at this juncture?”

Lucifer lets out a groan, but he lifts up his pinky. “Yeah, yeah. I pinky promise, then.”

Their little fingers latch on to each other, and they shake their hands up and down, one-two-three times.

“So now we’ve got, what, three promises?” Lucifer counts them off on his hands. “Daily compliments, hugging whenever, and kissing. I guess, since you already, uh, kissed me, you’re off the hook for the day.”

“I don’t think so.”

“Huh?”

“That happened *before* we made the deal.” Alastor sings. “So I have yet to fulfill my quota for today.”

He leans in, wanting to kiss Lucifer on the lips -

but he shies away at the last second, too unused to it. His eyes dart around, trying to figure out what to do instead.

It’s then that he notices Lucifer’s hand, still nestled in the space between them. He wraps his fingers around his, brings it up, and kisses the back of Lucifer’s hand.

Alastor isn’t sure whose face is redder - his, or Lucifer’s.

Chapter End Notes

AND THAT'S THE FINAL CHAPTER OF OSAS.
Thanks for reading!

Just kidding, of course! But this does conclude Act 4: Hotel Promotion (Side A) / Mutual Courtship, Ch. 21 - 25. Told you it’ll be a shorter one! Sliding into Act 5 now.

(You: omg Lucifer’s gonna confess first!
Me: no he ain’t 😈)

As I mentioned, Alastor is the one who will be initiating in this romance arc! 25 chapters later and they have their first kiss wtf, I am absolutely shocked that people are still reading this. Thank you so much!!

Fun Facts:
- The title The Deal (Not A Deal) has two meanings: Sera's agreement for Charlie's hotel, and Alastor/Lucifer's Kissing Deal LOL
- Since Lucifer had bad memories of Heaven, I wanted him to make good memories. So they became friends in Hell and became lovers in Heaven!
- They have all these romantic moments under the moon (ch. 9, ch. 10, ch. 14, ch. 21) so I wanted to bring it back here!
- Striking up a deal and saying "no killing, no maiming, no questions asked" is a reference to ch. 1
- Alastor's dislike of physical contact is from ch. 2
- Lucifer putting the finger under his chin mirrors the fake making out in ch. 18 BUT IT'S REAL THIS TIME!
- And also the sitting on lap moment parallels ch. 16
- Alastor was trying to text "going to Heaven" to Charlie

THANKS ALWAYS and see you next Friday! Leave theories/suggestions in comments below <3

The Title

Chapter Notes

CH. 26 FANART:
- comic by: @Simphony_Da_Kat
- drawn by @dirtgrubber: 1 + 2
- drawn by: @fullychaotichell
- drawn by: @w3ndi-g0
- drawn by: @blackzer0
- drawn by: @xxartbunnyxx

THANK YOU! Reach me via Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Angel, what is all this?"

"You asked about my investigation. So here it is!"

Charlie studies the oversized board, which is covered with a ton of pushpins and photographs. They're all linked together with a red thread, and a variety of handwritten notes:

'Lucifer gets jealous when I hold on to Alastor' - in Rosie's stylish calligraphy,

'ALASTOR IS TOO EASYGOING ABOUT AUTOGRAPHING PICS' - in Angel Dust's panicked scrawl,

'That son of a bitch complains to me when the king ignores him' - in Husk's messy writing.

"Have they been hanging out, um, 'privately,' for *this long?"* Charlie says, astounded.

Months upon months upon months of data, and she had been unaware about all of it. She feels a little guilty; she had been too concerned about her own worries to notice what was happening around her.

"Yes, dearie." Rosie pipes in. Angel Dust had video called her, and she peers at the board through his phone screen. *"I do believe it started off as mere fascination with one another. But it has truly blossomed into something quite beautiful!"*

"Nah, baby. It ain't *beautiful*. They're so nuts about each other, it's more like…"

and Angel Dust lets out a looooong wolf whistle.

“Wow, Angel.” Vaggie deadpans. “What a wonderful way to talk about Charlie’s dad.”

“I’m just sayin’!”

Charlie puts a hand on one of the photographs, examining it carefully. “But they already told me that they’re not dating. Remember? After we brought Niffty back?”

They all look down at Niffty, who is dashing around the room. She pauses when she feels them looking at her, a mop clutched in her hand.

“What?”

“It’s nothing, Niffty.” Charlie smiles at her, and Niffty shrugs before resuming her cleaning. She picks up a picture; Alastor has her dad in his arms, and they’re gazing at each other in Mimzy’s Club.

Aw. They look so happy, Charlie thinks. She examines the rest of the photos, where they’re engaged in a variety of activities - fighting, talking, dancing - and even when they’re at each other’s throats, there’s a kernel of affection in their expressions.

Like they’re having fun.

And then a lightbulb goes over her head, an *AHA!* moment that clears everything up for her.

“O-M-G, I know what it is now!” Charlie says excitedly. “They like each other, but they’re too shy to say something.”

“It ain’t shyness, princess.” Husk takes a long drag from his cigar, and the smoke coils around his head. “Too obtuse.”

“Or too stupid.” Angel Dust snickers. Charlie pays them no heed, her mind swirling with possibilities.

“We should help them!”

“With what?” Niffty skitters over curiously. When she tries to rearrange the board, Angel Dust picks her up by the scruff of her neck.

“Niff, keep ya hands off the evidence.”

“It’s so messy, though!”

“We’ll help them with their emotions!” Charlie says cheerfully, trying to get them to stay on topic. “We’ll make it SO romantic that they’ll have no choice but to confess to each other. Flowers! Hot air balloons! Chocolates! Wait, not chocolates, because Alastor hates sugar, but - ”

“Charlie.” Vaggie interrupts, her tone gentle. “You’re thinking too far ahead, sweetie.”

“We have no time to lose, Vaggie!” She says determinedly. “Why wait, when they can be happy *now?”*

It’s the perfect time, in Charlie’s opinion. Her dad has taken down the photos of her mom, so he must be ready to move on; Alastor went to search for him, and he’s still not back yet (he cares! He really, really cares!).

Charlie pulls her phone out, checking the last text that Alastor had sent her:

Lucifer
>gihgf to hracem

She’s gotten a little better at deciphering the string of typos he sends over. The first word is probably ‘going’? Regardless, it seems like he has it under control. Maybe?

“C’mon! Let’s call this plan, um.” She puts her hand on her face, thinking. “Since Alastor might become my new dad, I guess this will be Operation: Dads Dating. O.D.D. for short!”

“You’re okay with *Alastor* of all people becoming your dad?” Vaggie sounds skeptical.

“I mean, maybe not initially, buuuuuut….”

Ever since poker night, she’s had that seed of a theory - that they're up to... well, she's not sure what exactly, but it's definitely something. And now that all these weeks have gone by, she’s finally comfortable with the concept.

“I think it could be good. For both of them. You know?”

“What a lovely idea!” Rosie claps her hands together. *“I have been trying to hint at it for Alastor, but he seems to be stuck in a difficult position.”*

Charlie scribbles the acronym down on a sticky note, **O.D.D.,** and places it onto the corner of the board. “Okay! We’ll wait for them to come back. Meanwhile, we should think about what to do.”

“So do you believe me now, Charlie?” Angel Dust says. “I fuckin’ told you about the weird tension they had when you were planning for the ball!”

“Yes, you’re right.” Charlie nods her head vigorously. “Sorry for doubting you, Angel.”

He looks vindicated, his smile smug. “Well, we’re still gonna be Team H.A.R.D. You, ya girlfriend, and Niffty can be some kinda subcommittee. But that’s *it.”*

Vaggie squints at him.

“What the fuck is Team H.A.R.D?”

Vox is sitting in his surveillance room, and every single monitor is shut off. It's pitch-black now; the only light source is the television that acts as his head, perpetually turned on.

In the background, he can hear a shuffling noise.

"What are you doing, Val?"

Valentino's chuckle echoes in the space. "I could ask you the same question. What happened to your Alastor cameras?"

"Oh, fuck that guy." Vox scoffs. "He's disgusting now. Always making goo-goo eyes at the King."

"Lucifer?" Valentino sounds a little surprised. "I wasn't aware that they're dating."

"Oh, he wishes." Vox sneers. "He's just pining like a pathetic piece of shit. It was so fucking funny at first, but now it's getting kinda old."

"So you've given up on killing him?"

"I still want him to suffer. I just don't need to watch him 24/7; I know he'll be wherever Lucifer is." Vox smirks, a scheme forming in his head. "Just sit back and see what I've got planned."

As they prepare to head back down, Lucifer hurriedly pushes the clouds around, reverting them back to their usual position.

"So, uh… I know we agreed to keep it a secret. How d'you wanna do this?"

Alastor twirls his radio cane with one hand, mulling it over.

“Hmm. Let’s maintain our usual appearances, shall we?” He says brightly. “Although, it may be for the best to keep our contact to a minimum. Publicly, of course.”

“What about privately?”

There’s a hint of hope in Lucifer’s voice, which makes him feel a little embarrassed. But Alastor smiles wider, a grin that reaches his eyes.

“Oh, you.”

Alastor extends his arm out, almost touching Lucifer’s hand -

but he retracts at the last second, fingers twitching unsurely. Like he wants to, but doesn’t know if he should.

God, adorable, Lucifer thinks. Before Alastor can fully back away, Lucifer grabs onto his hand without hesitation,

palm-in-palm,

one large, one small, yet somehow fitting together perfectly. Alastor wraps his fingers around Lucifer’s hand, and they stand there, connected by that single point of contact.

“You keep doing that.” Lucifer notes. Alastor tilts his head in confusion.

“Doing what, exactly?”

“Reaching out, and then stopping. I know you did it at the masquerade ball.”

Alastor stiffens at this. “I could say the same about you.”

“Uh, what?”

“You’re always on the verge of petting my ears before giving up.” Alastor gestures at them, fluffy as always. “Such as at the rose garden! How *cowardly* of you.”

“A COWARD?” He scowls. “You’re the one who can’t even grab my hand!”

“Oh? You were unable to confess to me here!” Alastor says gleefully. “Looks like it’s my win.”

“You - ” Lucifer takes in a breath. “Are you trying to win at being in a relationship?”

“Perhaps.”

“I had plans, you fucker! *Romantic* plans!”

“And where are these alleged ‘plans’? I have yet to see them!”

“I’ll show you when we get back, douchebag! Prepare to be swept off your feet!”

There’s a sudden flapping of wings, and they both look up at the sound. That sullen angel is flying towards them - Lyre… or Lute... or Legato?

“Arguing as always, I see.” She says dryly, landing down in front of them. They both drop their hands hastily, and her eyes follow the motion. “Well, don’t stop on my account.”

“Lyre?” Lucifer blinks. “What are you doing here?

“It’s Lute.” Oh. So her name *was* Lute. “I overheard the seraphims speaking. They mentioned you two were up here.”

“So you’re gawking at us now?” Alastor smiles icily. “Are you that strapped for amusement in Heaven?”

“You sinful piece of - ” She stops halfway, and shakes her head. “Ugh. I’m not here to fight. I wanted to know if you’re here to tell Sera about what I did. With that… gremlin creature of yours.”

Lucifer watches as she fidgets nervously, shifting her weight from one foot to the other. “Oh, that? Nah. I didn’t say a thing.”

“You… didn’t?”

“Nope. And I wasn’t planning on saying anything, anyway.”

“You. *What?”* Lute sounds absolutely floored. “What kind of sick game are you playing at?”

Okay, now he’s confused. “Whaddya mean?”

“Look at what happened so far!”

Lute seems agitated; as she takes a step towards him, Alastor immediately thrusts his radio cane in-between her and Lucifer, his eyes distrustful.

“You should keep your distance.” Alastor warns. She *tsks* at his cold tone, but she doesn’t try to come any closer.

“I kidnapped your friend. I wounded you. Why are you covering for me?”

Lute grabs her arm protectively, her expression full of misgivings. There probably isn’t anything that Lucifer can say that will appease her, but he racks his brain anyway.

“I mean, if I’m being honest, I think Niffty liked you.”

Lute reels back at this. “What - ”

“And besides, I kinda know how you feel.” Lucifer says uncomfortably. “I was… well, I was left alone too, so. What you’re going through, with Adam…”

She bristles, looking away to avoid eye contact. In contrast, Alastor stares at him, his gaze heavy and scrutinizing. They haven't really touched upon the whole Lilith Of It All, and Lucifer isn't ready to delve into it just yet.

Shit, this is way way way way WAY too tense.

Lucifer hurriedly changes the topic. "And - okay, you cut me by accident! Stuff happens, right?"

"An accident?" Alastor's smile twitches. "You are far too nonchalant about this."

"It really wasn't a big deal. I heal fast. See?" Lucifer shows both of them his hands, which are completely smooth and undamaged. "That was pre-tty much a bug bite."

"Are you really comparing getting hurt by an angelic weapon to a *bug bite?"* She barks out a disbelieving laugh. "I don't understand you. I hurt you, and in exchange, you… protect me?"

"It's your responsibility, not mine." Lucifer says firmly. "And, look. I know you're not asking for my advice, but y'know, I think you should own up to it."

"I don't need your *advice."* Despite her strong words, there's something else in her expression. An inkling of gratitude. "But I will think about it."

She gives him a nod, and with a flap of her wings, Lute disappears into the distance.

When they open the doors to the tearoom, Sera and Emily both swivel to look at them.

"Eek! Hi!" Emily squeals. She flies over to greet them, her blue eyes warm and bright. "Gosh, how are you two? I wish I could have taken you around again. We barely spent any time together. Oh, wait! Before I forget!"

She materializes a piece of paper, and thrusts it into Lucifer's hands. "Here's a list of the most romantic spots in Heaven. You two should check them out next time."

Alastor narrows his eyes at him. "Did you tell - "

“THANK YOU, EMILY.” Lucifer says loudly. “BECAUSE THE *LAST TIME* WE HAD A DATE HERE, IT WAS GREAT.”

Alastor looks confused for a second, and Lucifer just stares at him harder, trying to telepathically remind him of their act. Eventually, a look of understanding dawns on his face.

“Indeed.” Alastor follows suit. “Although, I do prefer something with a little more bloodshed and terror!”

“Bloodshed?” Emily, bless her heart, takes his opinion seriously. “I wonder if we have anything like that up here. Sera, what do you think?”

“Possibly at the training grounds.”

“Oh?” Alastor perks up at the suggestion, but Lucifer cuts in quickly.

“Emily, uh, this is still kind of a new… relationship. So can we just keep it between us?”

“Aw, of course!” Emily beams. “I would never reveal your secret without your permission.”

He smiles back at her, feeling rather moved. *She’s so sweet. Kind of reminds me of Charlie.*

Sera motions towards Alastor. “I mentioned last time that we will continue our conversation about Hell. Well, you’re here now, Alastor. How do you feel about the conditions down there?”

“Oh? The seraphim would like my perspective? Such an honour.” His smile twists into a sneer. “Always room for improvement! But I do enjoy feasting on the souls of those inferior to me, ha-ha-HA!”

Sera shoots Lucifer a look, as though to say, *THIS is who you’re dating?*

“I see.” She settles on saying. “I will keep that in mind, then. If you are ready to head down, Emily will assist.”

“Yeah! Let me do that for you.”

As Emily starts up the portal, Lucifer turns towards Sera. Her lips are curved up slightly, and her gentle expression makes him want to try and, well.

Just *try.*

“So, uh,” Lucifer raises his arms awkwardly, “hug goodbye?”

Sera stares at him, her eyes widening, posture stiffening, smile faltering. There’s a long, drawn-out moment where nothing happens, and he almost lowers his arms until,

without a word,

she leans down to hug him.

And it's…

oh *god,* the whole thing feels unnatural and strained; how does hugging work again? He momentarily forgets; Lucifer feels himself start sweating from the discomfort-

"Yay! Group hug!"

Emily scoops them both up in her arms, bringing them close. Her embrace is firm yet comforting, and the awkwardness dissipates and Lucifer is smiling and Sera is smiling and they hug each other tightly and everything is, for a moment, perfect.

After they release each other, Alastor places a hand on Lucifer's shoulder, looking slightly put-out.

"Are you quite finished?"

"Why, you want a hug?" Lucifer teases. Alastor lets out a harrumph, and he releases his shoulder immediately.

"Oh, I do believe it's time for us to return. Your dawdling is costing us precious minutes!"

The gold portal shimmers under the chandelier lights. Alastor walks through it first, his long legs taking him to the other side in an instant.

"Shall we, then?"

Alastor turns around, and extends his hand towards him.

"My king."

The name makes something warm bloom in Lucifer's chest, and he grabs on without hesitation.

"Wait, did you hear that?"

"Hear what?" Vaggie asks. Charlie cups her hand to her ear.

"I think it's coming from the parlour."

She sticks her head out of Angel Dust's so-called Investigation Room, trying to see what the source of the noise is; from far away, she can see the silhouettes of Alastor and her dad, walking across the space.

"DAD!" Charlie shouts. "You're back!"

"I am!" Lucifer grins, waving at her wildly. Charlie runs over and tackles him into a hug, wrapping her arms around him tightly.

"I was so worried! Where were you?"

"Oh, just talking to - Sera - " she squeezes him harder, and he starts gasping for breath, "oof - Charlie dear, let go - "

"Oops!"

She releases him, and he looks at her apologetically.

"Sorry for the awful text, sweetie."

"It's okay, dad. How was it? Why did you have to go see her?"

Lucifer beams at this. "It's actually great news! She says that she's interested in your plans, and that if you have some results, to call Emily about it!"

"Really?" Charlie squeals. "That is AH-MAZE-ING! Okay, I really, reaaaalllyyy need to redouble my efforts, then."

She then leans over to address Alastor. "Oh! Alastor, did you go pick up my dad? Thank you so much!"

Inwardly, she's jumping for joy. *Looks like getting them together will be easier than I expected!*

"Just part of the duties of the facility manager!" Alastor's smile becomes slightly strained. "But I do have something rather terrible to inform you."

"What?"

"You will have to connect with Vox. He would like to use the hotel as the location for his party."

Angel Dust arrives right when Alastor says it, and he visibly recoils. "Wait a… not them again! Does that mean fuckin' *Val* will be here?"

"Oh, I do not know the details. Nor do I wish to know."

"They wanna use this as a venue?" Charlie looks at them worriedly. "But… last time, they tried to ruin our party. With the, um, photos."

“Yeah.” Lucifer says slowly. “Why, then?”

Alastor averts his gaze, choosing to ignore the incredulous looks from all three of them. “Well! His surveillance was the only reason I found out where your father went, Charlie. I wouldn’t have had to stoop so low if it weren’t for *you.”*

He points his radio cane towards Lucifer as an emphasis -

“Like it’s *my* fault that Sera asked me to go up? I got her to support Charlie’s plan, didn’t I?!”

Lucifer knocks his cane away with his own apple one -

“Dad, Alastor, it’s fine!” Charlie hurries between them, shoving them away from each other. “I’ll wait for Vox to contact us, okay? In the meantime, we should prepare to go busking! Let’s show Sera some good results!”

“Ah, yes. You did suggest that at the amusement park.” Alastor muses. He turns to look at Lucifer, a smirk on his face. “Will you be performing that awful accordion?”

“Hey! The accordion is not *awful!”*

“Oh, I beg to differ. And I’m sure the audience will agree with me.”

“Yeah?” Lucifer says hotly. “Then you’ll be fine if we each do a solo. Whoever has the louder applause, wins.”

“Of course. This little competition is long overdue.”

They glower at each other -

Lucifer turns to the left,

Alastor turns to the right,

and without so much as a passing glance, they separate into the night.

Charlie gapes at their disappearance. They’ve always had an undercurrent of tension, but they would normally stay in the same room to fight. Not *leave* each other.

“Did something happen up in Heaven?”

Angel Dust clenches one hand into a fist, and drapes another arm over her shoulder reassuringly.

“Don’t worry, Charlie. We’ll get them together, no matter what. And then I can fuckin’ move on with my life!”

They’re officially together, now. Although…

Alastor doesn’t know what that really entails. Is he supposed to ~~compose sonnets for Lucifer?~~

~~Arrange wildflowers into a bouquet?~~

Let’s not, he thinks, a bit ill at the thought. What he *does* do is teleport over to Lucifer’s room at 5 am, as per usual. He barely makes a sound as he carefully slinks over, and he watches Lucifer’s sleeping face.

For the first time, Alastor properly observes him in his slumber. Lucifer is unexpectedly quiet, merely lying there peacefully. His hair is splayed out on his white pillow like a golden halo, loose and free. Quite a rare sight, considering that he preferred to style his hair back.

Alastor hovers over him, brimming with a desire to run his fingers through his blonde locks. And it’s with a startling realization that, if he wants to do it, he can. He should.

He *will.*

Alastor leans down, his hand reaching out -

and then Lucifer grabs his arm, yanks him onto the bed with an utterly pleased look on his face, and he’s laughing and laughing and laughing…

“Caught ya! I knew you’d pull this shit again. I’ve been up for an HOUR already! You were slower than I expected, though. I brushed my teeth, organized my room…”

But Alastor stops paying attention because his head is resting on Lucifer’s chest, and he can hear his steady heartbeat, *badump-badump-badump,* the blanket acting as a barrier in-between them.

A single layer, but still too much.

Lucifer lets go of his arm, indicating that he’s free to leave. Instead, Alastor lifts his head up, and crosses his arms over Lucifer’s chest.

“Were you waiting for me in bed?”

Lucifer’s face flushes. “Oh god. You should watch what you say.”

“I don’t believe you dislike it.” Alastor’s voice is lowered. A bit rough around the edges. It makes Lucifer’s face transition from pink to red, and he feels a spark of satisfaction by his handiwork.

He does roll off to lie beside him, and Lucifer turns his head towards his direction. They lapse into silence, and it’s a strangely intimate feeling to stare into each other’s eyes. Something that they did all the time, but it takes on a new meaning now that they’re together.

Lucifer is the first to drop eye contact, although he looks like he has a question on the tip of his tongue.

“You are wondering about something.” Alastor states. Lucifer furrows his eyebrows at this.

“You can tell?”

“We have spent an inordinate amount of time together. It would be far stranger if I couldn’t, don’t you think?”

He turns Alastor’s words over in his head before nodding slowly.

“Well, I just… what are we now? To each other.”

And in a smaller voice, he adds:

“More than friends, right?”

His insecurity is plain on his face. Alastor moves his head in a little closer, and he finally manages to bring his hand to Lucifer’s hair, brushing the loose strands out of the way. It’s rather silky to the touch.

“More than friends.” Alastor agrees. “You are my…”

Lover?

It’s all too-difficult-too-much-too-laden-with-meaning, and his deer ears flatten in response. Affection really is quite a cross to bear, and it takes him great effort to say,

“My… Lucifer.”

The title feels insufficient. But when he chances a glance, there’s a grin tugging at Lucifer’s lips.

“I like the sound of that.”

Embarrassingly, he feels a flutter in his chest, resembling the flap of a hummingbird’s wings, and Alastor presses his forehead against his. The curvature of Lucifer’s mouth reminds him of their newly-established promise:

We’ll keep this a secret if we kiss everyday.

Which… come to think of it, he has yet to fulfill.

Alastor tips his face forward, heart hammering, a little timid, a lot nervous - *his eyes are so gold up-close, like the sun* - and Lucifer gives him a half-smile.

“You’re being really cute right now.”

“Do not call me cute.” Alastor mutters, but it’s without malice. He gently bumps his nose against Lucifer’s, grazing against each other, and Alastor can feel his slight exhale. The way his breath catches in his throat.

And he stops there.

He can’t bring himself to kiss him; it’s a little dizzying, just being this close, and he needs to pull back - he retreats -

but he halts in his tracks when Lucifer’s hand grasps his own.

“Don’t go yet.”

Lucifer’s voice is soft. Unsure.

“Please?”

Alastor swipes his thumb across the back of Lucifer's hand as his answer, and they stay there, the air weighed down by unspoken words, by terminated actions.

“A compliment.” Alastor manages to say. “You do owe me a compliment.”

A snort escapes from Lucifer’s mouth. “Really?”

“I am merely following the parameters of our deal.”

“Not a deal.” He says immediately. Like it’s second nature. “I’m pretty sure I called you cute already.”

“Oh, I require a new one. Something I haven’t heard before. Or have you run out of things to say?”

“No, no!” Lucifer says quickly. “I still got a million things I could say.”

“A *million?”* Alastor lifts an eyebrow. “Quite an overstatement.”

“I do!” Lucifer insists. He leans in, his voice hushed. Eyes sparkling. Scent intoxicating. “You are - ”

KNOCK!

They both jump at the sound, and Lucifer shoves Alastor off the bed, making him land on the ground with a painful *thunk!*

“Dad! We’re off to go busking now!” Charlie calls out. “What was that sound?”

“CHARLIE! It’s nothing!” Lucifer yells back. “JUST - TRIPPED!”

He scrambles off the bed and pushes Alastor into the closet, his hands frantic. “Get your ass in there.”

“You - ” He hisses at Lucifer - “absolute idiot - ”

He pays him no heed, stuffing him inside gracelessly. Once Alastor is pretzeled amongst the clothes, Lucifer swings the closet doors shut; through the gap between the door and the frame, Alastor can see him dashing to open his bedroom door.

“Morning!” Charlie says cheerfully, and she looks over Lucifer’s shoulder. “Is… were you talking to someone?”

“NOPE!” Lucifer smiles maniacally. “Just your ol’ dad in here, ha-ha-ha!”

She seems distrustful, but she doesn’t push the issue. “Actually, I can’t seem to find Alastor. Have you seen him?”

“Oh, that jerk is around here somewhere. Let’s go first. Now!”

“Um - okay!”

He glances over at Alastor before leaving, and the door slams shut. The coast is clear, but instead of departing, he slumps down further into the wardrobe. It’s filled to the brim with Lucifer’s clothes, and he gingerly pinches a sleeve.

Is this what my life has become? Hiding in plain sight, tiptoeing for secrecy?

Alastor’s smile widens, and he shifts away into shadow.

How very amusing.

Chapter End Notes

I loved seeing your reaction when I said OSAS was over LOL don’t worry I’d give you a warning first! And we’ve still got quite a ways to go! It’s been five months since I started writing this fic, absolutely bonkers. Thanks for being here!

Fun Facts:
- LOT OF HAND STUFF THIS CHAPTER (and always in OSAS I guess)
- The portal, with Alastor offering his hand to Lucifer, parallels to ch. 12 (when Lucifer offered his hand to Alastor)
- Alastor always sneaks up and tries to scare Lucifer throughout the story
- Referencing ch. 10 when they danced together: when Lucifer pulled his hand back, Alastor tried to grab it, but gave up
- Angel Dust's investigation officially started in ch. 9
- Ch. 21: Sera said they should talk more about Hell with Alastor
- Charlie hugging her dad too tightly is paralleling S1 Ep 5 LMAAOOO when Lucifer hugged her too hard
- The chapter title is referring to, you know. What they will call each other! So Alastor called him My Lucifer.
- Yes, he pushed Alastor 'back into the closet'

Thanks! Leave theories/suggestions in comments, see you next Friday <3

The Promotion

Chapter Notes

CH. 27 FANART:
- drawn by @dirtgrubber: 1 + 2
- animation by: @bobadila + 2
- meme and drawing by: @scarletpineapple
- drawn by: @twosoulss77

THANK YOU AND ILY! Send me anything via Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After the hotel residents arrive in the town square, they set up their instruments underneath a wooden gazebo. The lattice trellises are covered with blooming flower vines, and the structure provides a welcome shade from the afternoon sun.

“Beautiful spot, babe.” Vaggie says supportively. Charlie grins, looking pleased as punch.

“Thanks, Vaggie!”

As Charlie fiddles with her microphone stand, Lucifer makes his way over to her. He’s naturally assuming that they’ll perform side-by-side, but then she stops him with a raised hand.

“Dad! Soooo, I sorta have a specific vision for our show today. I want you to stand over there.” She points, and Lucifer spins to look at that direction.

“Over… where?”

“I’ll take you to the spot!”

She grabs him by the shoulders, relentlessly push-push-pushes him until he reaches the edge of the gazebo, and he’s met with the tall figure of…

Alastor, of all people. He’s standing far away from everyone else, and he has Niffty sitting on his shoulder. They stare at each other for a moment, and Charlie nudges Lucifer to get his attention.

“O-kay! Dad, can you stand beside Alastor?”

“Huh? Why?”

“I want us to stand in a row! That way it’ll be one tall,” she gestures towards Alastor, “one short,” motions to Lucifer, “tall again,” she points to herself, “and so on! I think we’ll look more balanced this way.”

He balks at this. “I mean, I… I dunno, Charlie.”

Honestly, Lucifer isn’t quite sure how to talk to Alastor at this point. Now that they’re secretly dating - *that probably sums up their relationship, right?* - they’re supposed to keep their interactions as normal as possible, but he’s having trouble remembering how they usually act.

Alastor doesn’t seem to share his concerns, however, and he effortlessly slips back into repartee.

“Oh? Perhaps you’ll absorb some of my musical prowess by standing nearby. You certainly need it!”

Lucifer groans, but inwardly, he feels reassured to hear his rude remarks. “As if I’d ask *you!* Why don’t you learn a li’l something from me instead?”

“And what is that, exactly? Will you teach me your ways of being horribly off-key?”

“Wow!” Lucifer says sarcastically. “Nope. I’m just here to show you what *real* music sounds like.”

“Ooh! Is it polka?” Niffty says excitedly, and Alastor sends her a withering glare.

“Niffty, my dear. You should refrain from encouraging him.”

Charlie waves at them wildly, trying to get their attention. “We’re gonna start soon! Niffty, come with me. Why don’t you stand beside Angel?”

Without waiting for an answer, she reaches up to pluck her off of Alastor’s shoulder. The two of them dash away; oddly enough, everyone else is on the other side of the pavilion, leaving Alastor and Lucifer behind.

Alone together, at last.

Lucifer turns to him, and they face off. Silently study each other. Alastor’s red eyes feel hot on his face; it burns right through him, through his skin to his blood to his bones, and…

Oh, geez - can’t breathe -

Lucifer nervously yanks at his shirt collar, and Alastor’s gaze slides towards the motion. What's he supposed to say right now, anyway? Bickering is a knee-jerk reaction for them - he’s always rejoiced in how he can make Alastor lose his composure, but there’s something else in the air.

An electric frisson.

Impossible to ignore.

He feels it thrum in his veins when they lock eyes, and Lucifer's having increasing difficulty with keeping his cool.

But once again, Alastor's demeanour is positively unaffected; he uses his radio cane to draw a line between them, marking a clear division.

"Since you will be performing nearby, why don't you keep to your side, hmm?"

"Uh, it wasn't my idea to come over here!"

"Ah, yes. Charlie's *very* special vision." Alastor says sardonically. "Although, if one were to have our heights be truly balanced, you would need to step on a stool."

Lucifer scowls. "Or you could get lower."

"Even if I grovelled at your feet, I would still be taller than you!" Alastor laughs, sounding thoroughly amused by the notion, and Lucifer wants to wipe that smug smile off his face.

So he beckons Alastor over with his finger.

"C'mere."

"What is it?" He sounds suspicious, but Alastor does walk to him. Once they're standing across from each other, Lucifer intentionally lowers his voice, so quiet that Alastor has to lean in to hear him:

"Prove it, then."

Lucifer murmurs.

"Kneel."

And Alastor snaps his head back,

gaze flicking between his face,

to the ground,

and then upwards again, his eyes wide with surprise.

They don't speak - *can't* speak, actually, because that's when Charlie taps on the microphone a few times, indicating that they're about to begin their performance.

"Hi there! We're from the Hazbin Hotel. Are you new to Hell? Come join us for free food, free shelter, and protection from any bloodthirsty people!"

Niffty strikes her two cymbals together, making a loud *clang!*

“We’ll show you how to handle yourself in Hell, how to become a better, stronger person, and how to have a good time! Safely, of course.”

Angel Dust lets out a single blare from his trumpet.

“You can come and go as you please. And, the best part is, you don’t have to sign a contract with an overlord to stay alive!”

This attracts a few curious onlookers, and they crowd around the gazebo.

“We’ll be performing a few songs today. We do fun stuff like this all the time, so if you’re interested, come join us at the hotel!”

Charlie raises her conductor’s baton, *a 5, 6, 7, 8,* and they start playing music.

They perform songs together for the rest of the day. People mill about, picking up the leaflets that are stacked neatly on the ground, or tossing in some money. (Husk had eagerly set his hat down on the ground for this part.)

A cute, small-looking demon even throws in a single flower before running away. When they’re finally done their set list, Charlie tucks the flower into her hair, and then nudges Lucifer.

“Dad, you wanted to perform something, right?”

“Yeah! Thanks, dear.”

Lucifer stands at the centre of the pavilion, and he replaces his fiddle with his accordion.

He presses a key-

“Ah, ah, ah.” Alastor tuts disapprovingly. “You should inform the audience of the rules *first,* before you begin.”

“Yeah, yeah.” Lucifer rolls his eyes, but he turns to the crowd. “Alright, for the next two songs, can you clap for the one that you like? We’re having a little competition, and whoever gets the louder applause is the winner.”

When Charlie nods at him, he plays an energetic song that he *knows* is a crowd-pleaser. It's lively, fun, and brisk; Niffty even dances along at the front, twirling happily to the beat.

Once he's completed, he receives a hearty round of applause, and he bows with a flourish.

"Yay!" Niffty runs over to Lucifer, and starts to climb up his leg. "Again!"

She only makes it to his knee before Alastor strides towards them, his long legs taking him over in a flash. He wrenches her off fluidly, so quick that Lucifer feels a breeze from his movement.

"Oh, Niffty. That little performance was nothing!"

"Nothing?" Lucifer repeats heatedly.

"A mere amuse-bouche, if you will." Alastor smirks at him, and he throws Niffty into the arms of Husk. "Prepare yourself for the entrée!"

Alastor materializes a mahogany bench.

And then -

He conjures up a -

A fucking harpsichord? What the hell!

Lucifer is absolutely flabbergasted as he stares at the instrument. He hasn't seen one of these in a while, because it's *ancient.* Although it resembles a piano, the harpsichord features a double keyboard, layered on top of one another.

And of course, the one Alastor summons is ostentatiously grand, the wood gleaming under the sun. He sits down on the musical bench, his hands poised elegantly.

Once Alastor plays the first note, Lucifer knew it was his loss.

Game, set, match.

God.

The song Alastor plays sounds brittle, yet charming. Formal, yet accessible. He moves between the two keyboards with practiced skill; the crowd *ooh's* and *ahh's* with every musical verse, and they crescendo into thunderous applause when he finishes.

Alastor shoots him a triumphant smile.

"Well! The score appears to be 3 - 2."

"You fucking show-off." Lucifer can't help but admire him, just a little. "Fine. What'll it be?"

"I have yet to decide. I suppose you have something to look forward to now!" Alastor cackles, already disappearing by means of his shadow when he says,

“I tire of seeing your face, so I will be taking my leave.”

“Took the words right outta my mouth!” Lucifer shouts, but he’s already gone.

Everyone splits off afterwards except Vaggie and Lucifer, and they distribute flyers together in front of the pavilion.

They haven’t spent much time with each other - which, consequently, meant that they didn’t have much to *talk* about. She looks over at him, and when they make eye contact, they both smile at each other uncomfortably.

“Ahem-hmm-hmm!“ Lucifer clears his throat, breaking the silence. “So, uh. You’ve been with Charlie for a while now, huh?”

Is he gonna tell me that I’m not good enough for his daughter? Vaggie thinks, a bit concerned. *Threaten to kill me if I break her heart? That’s how these parent talks go, right?*

“Yes, sir. She saved me after Heaven… well. Abandoned me.”

“Ah.” Lucifer’s face is full of empathy, and she softens at this. Because, needless to say, he *knows* how it feels. It’s possible that they’re the only two people in Hell who have gone through a situation like this.

To be used by Heaven, and then eventually, tossed away.

“She helped me with my eye.” Vaggie points at her wound, which is hidden by her long hair. “Honestly, her kindness blew me away.”

“That sounds like Charlie.” Lucifer says fondly. They hand out brochures to some passersby, and then Vaggie begins the conversation this time.

“I know you just came back from, uh.” She gestures up, towards Heaven. “How… are you… feeling?”

She’s not that great at small talk, or even about saying the right thing, so her sentences come out awkwardly. Lucifer doesn’t seem to mind, though. He peers off into the distance, a thousand-yard stare.

“Honestly, it’s kinda hard to focus, you know?”

“Yeah. I feel the same way. It was so *weird* for me, to go back up. And it’s not any easier the second time around. It’s like, everything looks the same, but - ”

“ - it feels different now.” Lucifer finishes her sentence, and she nods.

“Completely.”

They share a look of understanding, two individuals connected by past trauma. And after all this time, Vaggie feels like she finally *gets* Lucifer. That he’s been hurt in the past, but he’s still here, making the best of it. A kindred spirit.

And, undoubtedly, he deserves to have a good life in Hell.

Which is… er... what?

Vaggie tries to visualize what that would even mean for him, and she flashbacks to all those photographs Angel Dust had of him and Alastor. She doesn’t see the appeal in the *radio demon* whatsoever, but Lucifer seemed to enjoy his presence.

Maybe she should work a little harder at this whole O.D.D. (Operation: Dads Dating) plan that Charlie embarked on.

“So, um. How are… you…” *and Alastor,* she wants to say, but it sounds so unsubtle she has to change tactics.

Instead, she asks:

“Are you happy?”

“Me?” Lucifer pauses.

And then his face breaks into a smile, so dazzling it practically rivals the sun.

“I’m the happiest I’ve been in ages!”

Vaggie has to shield her eyes from him, but she smiles back. “That’s… that’s great, sir. I’m glad to hear that.”

Plus, now she knows which parent Charlie resembles more.

“I told you! It’s Lucifer!” An unfamiliar voice shouts, and they both turn to look at who it is. A group of sinners approach them, all of them so tall that they tower over Vaggie and Lucifer. She immediately straightens her back, but Lucifer doesn’t look threatened at all.

“Yep! The one and only.”

“See? He was promoting…” one of them starts to say, before she trails off sheepishly. “What were you promoting, again?”

He hands over a brochure, which she takes, and her friends all crowd around to see it.

“Oh. This is for the Hazbin Hotel? Didn’t angels fight there at the last extermination?”

“We won.” Vaggie says flatly. The demons don’t seem deterred by her caustic tone - probably because they’re way too preoccupied with talking to Lucifer.

“What’s there to do at this hotel?”

“It’s fun!” Lucifer says. “Charlie has some trust exercises, right?”

“We also have songs, and dancing,” Vaggie lists it off on her fingers, “we have rooms - ”

“Will you be there?” They cut her off, speaking to Lucifer.

“Well, I work there. So yeah.”

They all light up at this, but there’s a nefarious glint in their eyes. Vaggie would normally elaborate some more, but she has a weird feeling about this group. Lucifer seems to pick up on her discomfort, and he swivels to look at her.

You okay? He mouths. Vaggie nods, but she never takes her eyes off of them.

“Amazing!” The demon snatches up a couple pamphlets. “So, Lucifer. What room are you in?”

“That’s confidential.” Vaggie interjects, glaring at them. She can hear Charlie in the back of her head, saying that everyone deserves second chances, but surely not *these* people?

“Whatever.” The demon huffs. “We’ll definitely be there.”

“Or don’t.” Vaggie calls out. It’s too late, however - the sinners ignore her, chattering excitedly amongst themselves as they walk away.

Alastor had only teleported a few blocks away from Lucifer; he can still see him from a distance, handing out leaflets with Vaggie. It had been a necessary retreat, because he was feeling off-kilter. A bit unbalanced.

And the culprit was entirely *Lucifer,* and his ridiculous, throwaway comment.

"Kneel," he had said.

Alastor grits his teeth together, his deer ears flattening, because…

Why does that sound ever so appealing?

All these sensations surrounding Lucifer made him strangely lightheaded (with delight? with dismay?), and it's an impossible task for him to adjust to it. He considers departing to his radio tower, spend some time alone to think - to plan - to observe.

He's a little different, now. Engaged in a romantic affair, of all things, and it's completely uncharted territory for him. So what is there to do?

But he gets distracted from his thoughts when he hears it.

Some peculiar… whisperings.

Alastor's deer ears perk up, and he tries to pick up on the source. He hones in on a group of demons, tall and strong-looking, all holding up flyers that have the words **HAZBIN HOTEL** on them. They still sound muffled, and so he approaches them slowly, making sure to conceal himself in his shadow.

At this proximity, he can finally hear their chatter.

"…okay, since Lucifer is staying at the Hazbin Hotel, we should go there. Now."

"Really?" Another one says. "Do we need an invite or something?"

"He said we have to do something first. An exercise or whatever."

"An exercise with *Lucifer?"* One of them cackles. "Oh hell yeah. I'm up for anything if it's with *him!* He's bite-sized, and I'm ready to be bitten."

Alastor bristles at the implication, but he continues to eavesdrop.

"What?" The other demon crinkles their nose. "He's kinda short, isn't he? I don't like that in a guy. I wanna have sex with someone who's bigger than me."

"Whatever. I'm just gonna go to the hotel and see if he's down to fuck. I haven't had a good lay in a while."

"I call dibs after!"

The rest of their conversation fades.

Disappears into a faint noise.

Because he's submerged in an utter, overwhelming *anger* - it crashes into him - engulfs him entirely - Alastor clenches his fist, his eyes distorting into radio dials -

How *dare* they talk about Lucifer in this way? Like he's not important. Like he's just something to use and discard once they're done. Trash, the lot of them. Disgusting disgusting disgusting disgusting disgusting disgusting disgusting -

He knows what to do, now.

His tentacles burst out to grab them, flinging them into the air. Their screams are music to his ears; the siren call of the weak.

"Do share more details. I am dying to know your plans!" Alastor says faux-pleasantly, his voice mottled and dark.

"AH! W- what gives?" One of them shrieks. He ignores their cries, his smile widening until he's practically all teeth.

"If I see you around the Hotel, I will tear you from limb to limb. And I will go as slow as possible, ensuring that you feel every agonizing second of pain."

He squeezes them tighter, enough that they can't help but choke.

"I will find your loved ones, and devour you in front of them." He grows bigger and bigger and bigger, his entire body glowing green. "And as they scream, *begging* me to stop, I will kill them too."

"O - " one of them gasps, trying to speak. Alastor loosens his grip a little, and she coughs out, "WE WON'T GO! WE WON'T, OKAY?!"

"Good."

Alastor drops them without a care, and they smack against the pavement painfully. They scramble away, fast as lightning, and he reverts back to his usual form. Undoubtedly, if they *had* shown up at the hotel, Lucifer would have dealt with them swiftly. It was wholly unnecessary for him to do any of this.

Still: he didn't like it, didn't like what they were saying, didn't like what they were *planning*. He feels somewhat satisfied to see their cowering backs, but…

it's not enough. He still feels sickened, and he puts his hand over his neck uncomfortably. What can he do, to feel a little better?

An image of Lucifer appears in his head, and he lets out a sigh.

Fine. I will give in, for now.

Alastor materializes right between Lucifer and Vaggie, smacking into her so hard she falls onto the ground.

“Alastor, you shitass!” Vaggie growls, wincing from the pain. “What the fuck was that for?!”

“Oops!” Alastor sings. “I must have miscalculated.”

(It was intentional, of course. She had been standing a *little* too close to Lucifer.)

“You okay?” Lucifer sounds concerned. He sticks his hand out to help her up; Vaggie is about to accept it when Alastor knocks Lucifer’s hand away with his radio cane, and offers *that* to her instead.

“What do you want, anyway?” Vaggie grumbles. She ends up grabbing his cane, and Alastor lifts her onto her feet.

“Charlie asked for your assistance, my dear.” Alastor lies smoothly. He snatches up the brochures in her hands, and waves her away. “I shall finish up on your behalf, hmm?”

At the name of *Charlie,* Vaggie’s posture relaxes.

“Really? I’ll go find her now, then.”

She waves goodbye, Lucifer waves back (Alastor does not), and off she goes.

When he’s certain that she’s gone, he turns to Lucifer. They’re standing near enough that their arms brush against each other slightly, accidentally-on-purpose.

“I thought you left.” Lucifer says wryly. “What’re you doing here?”

He opens his mouth, thinking of an excuse to say.

But it’s hushed in his head. All the bewilderment, the rage… it’s gone when they’re face-to-face like this. How pleasant it is, for his mind to be quiet for once.

He remains silent, and Lucifer lifts his hand…

like he’s about to touch his arm…

but he pinches the hem of Alastor’s sleeve instead. Tugs at it, trying to get his attention.

“You okay?” Lucifer asks, a tinge of worry in his voice. Alastor looks down at where he’s holding, but he doesn’t make a move.

“Okay, new plan.” Lucifer drops his hand ~~- unfortunately -~~ and crosses his arms instead. "Let’s get outta here.”

Alastor tilts his head. “Oh? Wherever shall you take me?”

Lucifer creates a portal, and it shimmers invitingly.

“My place.”

“Charlie! I finally found you.” Vaggie runs up to her, and she’s a little out of breath. “What did you need me for?”

Charlie blinks in confusion. “I mean… I always want to see you, Vaggie, but I don’t remember asking you for anything.”

“Really? Alastor told me you wanted my help.”

“Oh, that’s kinda strange. I haven’t seen him since he finished his performance.”

Vaggie smacks her own forehead, looking annoyed. “I guess he just wanted me to leave. God, and I fell for it!”

“Aw, Vaggie! It’s okay.” Charlie pats her head reassuringly. “Now that you’re here, you wanna head back together? I think we’ve done a lot today.”

“Sure, hon.”

As they walk down the street together, Charlie can feel someone’s watchful eye on her back. She turns around, concerned about who it could be, but she doesn’t seem to see anyone.

“H - hey!”

She looks around. “Did someone say something?”

“Yeah! Down… down here!”

Charlie drops her gaze downwards, and she’s suddenly eye-to-eye with a couple of small sinners. They’re about as tall as Niffty, and she recognizes one of them - the one who threw a

flower during their performance.

“Oh, hi! I know you. You gave us this, right?” Charlie motions towards the flower, which is still tucked behind her ear.

“Yeah! Um… you look pretty with it.” The demon says shyly. It’s an innocent remark, and Charlie coos over it internally.

“What a sweetie! Vaggie, don’t you think she’s so cute?” Charlie says happily. Vaggie squints at the tiny demon, but then nods begrudgingly.

“Sure.”

“Did you need something?” Charlie asks. The group of them exchange timid glances, before finally pushing the smallest one forward.

“Right. Um… we saw your performance, and your hotel sounds kinda nice. We’re new to Hell, and we’re not sure what to do here. Can you help?”

Charlie’s eyes start to water. *No way! Is this really happening? Did we actually manage to reach someone’s heart?*

She takes in a deep breath, and shouts:

“OF COURSE WE’LL HELP!”

For some odd reason, Lucifer brings him *outside* of his house.

They sit together on the porch steps, right in front of the entrance, and he looks at Alastor unblinkingly. “You seem tense. Did something happen?”

“Do I, now?” It’s always a shock when Lucifer can pick up even the slightest change in his mood, and Alastor sidesteps the question. “So this is your mansion, hmm? How needlessly gaudy.”

“Hey!” He sends him a dirty look. “It’s perfect, alright?”

“Considering that you *did* decorate the Hazbin Hotel in such an awful manner, I should have expected nothing less.”

“Oh, what? You just make everything red and black!”

“Such big talk from someone who only enjoys circus imagery.”

They glare at each other, although it’s nothing serious. It never is, really. Lucifer backs down first, his eyes downcast.

“But… seriously.” He continues delicately. “You good? You had a weird look on your face.”

And what is Alastor supposed to say to that? *I heard some sinners speak ill about you, and I felt nauseated? I wanted to see you, so now I’m here?*

How utterly nonsensical.

Lucifer is still waiting for an answer, so he settles on a half-truth.

“I was hoping to be alone.”

“Oh.” He furrows his eyebrows. “Whoops - uh. I should go then, huh? Or… you can go? I don’t even - what should - ”

“You - ” Alastor snarls, and now he has a headache. He places his hand on his forehead, the pain pulsating like a familiar beat at this point. “Do not make me say it.”

“Say what?”

Lucifer looks genuinely puzzled. Alastor doesn’t know whether to hit him or hold him.

“I was hoping to be alone…”

with you, he finishes the sentence in his head, *because you perplex me, you draw me in, you help with the confusion yet you also add to it…*

The headache transforms into a pressing migraine, and he lets out a growl, irritated at his inability to express affection. What is wrong with him? *Is* there something wrong with him? Alastor puts both hands over his eyes, trying to calm his breathing.

And then he feels something press on his shoulder.

Alastor peeks through his fingers, half-expecting it to be Lucifer’s hand or something, but… it’s…

He had leaned his head against Alastor’s shoulder.

(An action he had never done before.)

Soft blonde hair.

His delicious scent.

Bright golden eyes, which look at him worriedly.

Alastor takes in a sharp breath at the contact, but he doesn't jerk away. His headache wanes; they sit there together, and Alastor drops his hands into his lap. A miracle cure, once again.

"Did you figure out what request you wanna make?" Lucifer asks, his head still on his shoulder. Alastor considers it, and then nods.

He *had* been wondering about something for a while.

"I would like to see your ve-ry mystifying preparations." Alastor glances at him from the corner of his eye. "In fact, why don't you show me now, hmm?"

Lucifer lifts his head up in surprise. *"That's* your request?"

He waits for Lucifer to put his head back down, and when he doesn't, there's a slight pang in Alastor's chest. It burns inside of him. An unrecognizable feeling. He swivels towards Lucifer, wanting to ask him to lay his head on him, but he's unable to produce a sound.

Very well, then. Alastor thinks, exasperated at himself.

He places his hand on Lucifer's cheek. No matter how many times he does it, it's still a marvel to feel his smooth skin, the soft warmth that exudes from within. Alastor cradles him carefully in his palm,

before bringing Lucifer's head back down onto his shoulder.

"Oh," Lucifer says quietly, and it's a nice *oh,* a content *oh,* and Alastor doesn't dare look at him because he can feel his own face warm up. What a pity it is, that he's still prone to these physiological responses.

Eventually, Lucifer says:

"You can keep your request."

Alastor has a hard time processing it, at first.

"Are you *declining?"*

It may have been called a request, but… neither one of them had ever turned it down before.

"No-no-no-no-no! That's not what I meant." Lucifer sounds frantic. "I mean, I was gonna show you, anyway. So, uh, why don't you hold on to it, and make a different request later?"

"Oh." Alastor blinks. "What a generous offer!"

And he genuinely means it.

“You can follow me.” Lucifer gets up from the stoop. “It’s actually - it’s right around the corner.”

“What is?”

Lucifer looks at him, a mysterious smile on his face.

“What I’ve made for you.”

Chapter End Notes

I apologize for saying HAND STUFF in my author’s notes last chapter, I’m as bad as Lucifer at this point omfg… the worst part is that it was unintentional what the fuck 😭

Fun Facts:
- Charlie has tried to recruit people to join her hotel in ch. 10 - 11 and ch. 22 - 23
- In ch. 18 Lucifer also turned down Alastor’s suggestion of a deal, because he’s happy to do it for him (for free, basically)
- Vaggie wondered about Lucifer’s time in Heaven in ch. 19
- Wanted to show that there are sinners who are open to change and want help (like the tiny demons) vs people who are selfish and cruel (like the ones trying to slide into Lucifer’s room)
- Lucifer’s romantic plans, which he’s been preparing since ch. 24! Finally he's gonna do it!!
- Alastor likes when Lucifer’s a little commanding (ch. 23)

Thank you and see you next Friday! My slow burn hurt me so I’m gonna crank up the HEAT next chapter 😏 Leave theories/suggestions in comments!

The Confession

Chapter Notes

CH. 28 FANART:
- drawn by: @Simphony_Da_Kat
- drawn by: @fullychaotichell
- drawn by: @kai_loves_coffe
- comics by @dirtgrubber: 1 + 2
- drawn by: @elkaseltzer
- drawn by: @xxartbunnyxx
- drawn by: @miadarkarcher

ILY! Reach me on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

They walk in dead silence as he guides Alastor to the jazz club, and he can practically hear the breeze in the air, rustling the grass beneath them. Usually, they would squabble at the speed of light, but he can't bring himself to make conversation; he's a little too nervous about finally showing Alastor that.*

(*his confession.)

When they reach the jazz club, Alastor carefully examines the black and red building. There's a little neon sign that hangs at the front, which contains a detailed depiction of a trumpet. Otherwise, there's barely any indication about what it actually *is*.

"This décor is somewhat different from your usual style." It's the first thing Alastor's said in the past few minutes, and he turns to Lucifer inquisitively. "Are we still at your place of residence?"

"Technically, yeah."

Lucifer pushes the door open, and they step inside, their footsteps echoing in the darkness. It's impossible to see anything, and so he snaps his fingers, instantaneously igniting every single candle. The dancing flames cast warm shadows across their faces, and the entire place feels cozy in this lighting.

Alastor's eyes are fixed on the raised platform at the front. Lucifer had positioned a multitude of instruments on the stage, artfully arranged for easy access.

"Oh? A piano, a double bass… drums…" Alastor points at each one when he says their name. "Have you brought me to a jazz club?"

“Yeah!” Lucifer smiles with relief. At least he knows what kind of establishment it’s supposed to be. “Wanna look around?”

“A grand tour from the sovereign himself? I *suppose* that is agreeable.”

“Wow! You should be grateful that I even offered, bitch.”

“Begging your pardon, sire.” Alastor bows with mock respect. When he lifts his head up, his eyes dance with glee- clearly just messing around with him- but Lucifer sticks his tongue out at him anyway.

“C’mon, this way. So the bar is here,” he gestures to the fully-stocked counter, “the second floor has some more instruments you can play, and extra seating. There’s a couple of private booths, too. And - oh! Right here is the dance floor…”

They explore the building together; embarrassingly enough, Lucifer had made it much bigger and grander than he intended to. But it’s deeply inspired by all the things that Alastor likes, and he can hear him give an appreciative hum whenever something strikes his fancy.

When they’re done, they return to the first floor using the spiral staircase. Alastor wanders towards the bar, leaning over the cocktail counter to touch a whiskey bottle - the same brand they drank at the casino party. He turns it over in his hands, watching as the amber liquid sloshes inside the crystal.

“How splendid. You just *happen* to have a secret jazz club beside your abode?” Alastor relinquishes his hold from the glass, and sets it back down. “I must say, I am a little wounded that you have been hiding this from me.”

He demonstrates his displeasure by using his index finger and thumb, purposefully making the distance wide between them.

“I didn’t *hide* it! I -”

Lucifer hesitates here. Should he just brush it off, and say that it’s always been by his house? Or should he admit that he created it, solely for Alastor? He’s having second thoughts now, hemming and hawing.

“Yes?” Alastor inquires. He doesn’t seem disgusted - he actually seems kind of pleased by the place, based on how he continuously examines the jazz lounge.

And okay, fine. Lucifer *did* go through all that effort, so maybe it’s time to speak his truth.

“I made it for you.”

Alastor tilts his head, not fully understanding.

“Interesting. And what did you make for me?”

“The… this building.”

“Hmm?”

“This whole,” Lucifer waves a hand, his words failing him, “uh, everything.”

Alastor’s eyes widen. Keeps quiet. Places a hand on a lacquered chair, before he pulls it out to sit down. He’s still as a statue, and his lack of a verbal response makes Lucifer prattle on in shaky bursts.

“Well! Y’know, I figured, you like jazz, you like performing music, you like being a walking, talking mystery, so now you can just, disappear here for a few hours, and that way people can wonder ‘gee, where’d that bellhop go,’ right? Ha-ha-ha…”

His laughter fades, and he’s faced with the uncomfortable feeling that maybe…

Oh shit. He hates it. It’s too much, right?

Lucifer hesitantly sits across from him, watching as Alastor puts his hand over his face. Not a good sign, right? Probably not.

“Is this bad?” He asks, his voice small. “I -”

“It is many things, Lucifer.” Alastor cuts him off, fast and hurried. “But it is certainly not *bad.”*

Hearing his name uttered from Alastor’s lips shouldn’t delight him this much, but it does. Sends tingles all the way down his spine. He waits as Alastor mulls over what to say, and he can practically see the gears grinding away in his head.

“Truthfully, no one has ever - gone to such… lengths - for me.” Alastor speaks haltingly, short sentences that he forces out of his mouth. “I must admit, I am rather…”

And then he winces, putting his hand on his head. A familiar gesture.

Lucifer immediately leaps out of his chair and rushes over to him, debating where he should put his hand. It’s a mystifying solution - every time he looks like he’s in agony, it seems that a light touch helps ease the pain.

Maybe his head, then?

He gently runs his fingers through Alastor’s soft hair, and, like clockwork, it does the trick. Alastor lets out a sigh of relief, and leans his head further into Lucifer’s palm; the action catches him by surprise, and it’s so goddamn endearing he almost wants to weep.

“I am…”

Alastor’s words are a bit strangled.

“I will confess that I am rather…”

He inhales sharply. Exhales fully.

And then:

“I am quite moved.”

“You like it?” Lucifer asks, hope audible in his voice.

“Well! You *did* fashion it to my taste.” That’s pretty much Alastor’s way of admitting he does, indeed, like it, so Lucifer will take it. He continues to talk, sounding smoothly conversational.

(He’s back to normal, it seems.)

“I assume you left in order to create this, then?”

Lucifer drops his hand, and Alastor raises his head when the physical contact disappears.

“Well, kinda. I have another part.”

“Is that so?” He looks intrigued. “What other spectacles shall you show me tonight?”

“One sec.”

Lucifer strides towards the podium. He can feel Alastor’s eyes hot on his back as he climbs onto the stage, struggling a little as he hoists himself up onto the edge. Geez, why did he make it so tall?

He clambers on anyway, standing at the centre of the stage, adjusting his hat, smoothing down his vest, buttoning up his jacket -

“Are you quite finished?” Alastor calls out, voice echoing.

“Just WAIT!” Lucifer yells back. He claps his hands together, and a spotlight flicks on, shining on top of him. Always good to have a little oomph. Should he throw in some glitter? A fog machine? Lasers?

He shakes his head vigorously - *okay, enough, that’s definitely too much* - grabs the microphone, and starts speaking energetically, as though he were the host of a musical show.

“Thanks for coming to my peeeeeeeeerformance!”

Alastor lets out a snort, but he watches with close attention.

“I’ll be playing a song tonight. This goes out to the rudest jerk in the entire universe. Who could that be, you ask? Well, he’s here with us tonight!”

Another spotlight shines on Alastor, who looks thoroughly amused, and he splays his fingers against his chest in an elegant manner.

“Ah, yes. How kind of you! But I will have to turn down that title, for *you* are clearly the reigning champion.”

“Hear that, everyone? Check out how modest he is!”

Alastor barks out a laugh now, an uncontrolled sound that slips out from his mouth.

“Okay, but enough about him.” Lucifer continues, materializing his violin in an arc of gold. “You’re here to hear me play, right?”

“Indeed.” Alastor laces his fingers together underneath his chin. “Well, this will certainly be a sight to see.”

“Shhh.” Lucifer places a finger on his lips. “Show’s starting.”

And he really does cease talking, waiting expectantly for Lucifer to begin. He looks up at the spotlight, trying to calm his nerves.

It’s all good, he thinks, *just breathe.*

The world slows down, and fades away into silence.

Lucifer rests his violin onto his collarbone.

Grips the neck of the instrument.

He lifts up his violin bow,

drawing

o
u
t

the first note.

It’s purposefully prolonged; a deeply rich sound. As Lucifer peeks over at him, he’s struck with the startling intensity of Alastor’s single-minded gaze, focusing on him with such concentration he almost falters.

He turns aside to sink back into the music, and he plays, and plays, and plays…

When he pulls the bow, *arco,* Alastor stares at him, enraptured.

When he plucks the notes, *pizzicato,* Alastor drums his fingers on the table to the beat.

The music swells bewitchingly; it’s got everything he’s feeling, imbued within it. The uncertainty, the devotion. His insecurity, his hope. But most importantly, it’s a ballad for romance - the music score of his resolve.

As he draws out the last note, he sweeps his bow to the side, heart thumping in his throat. Anxiously anticipating Alastor’s reaction.

“So - that’s the end!” Lucifer manages to say. The microphone sounds deafening in the quietude, and Alastor looks startled out of his reverie. “Tips are always appreciated.”

He places his hat down jokingly, and waves his violin away. Instead of getting off the stage, he sits on the edge of it, swinging his legs in the air. Waiting.

And waiting.

And…

Alastor walks over. Stands right in front of him. They’re at the same eye-level for once, and now Lucifer is the recipient of his full, undivided attention.

Alastor drops a few coins into the hat on the ground,

clink-clink-clink,

and then he leans on his radio cane, body angled towards Lucifer.

“You never told me you were proficient in jazz.” Alastor says quietly, and he hums the melody. “Admittedly, it is quite an exquisite tune. Who is it by?”

“Uh…”

Lucifer points at himself.

“Me. I composed it.”

Alastor blinks owlishly. Bereft of speech, once again. Lucifer’s not sure if this was good or bad.

“And I wrote it… for…you.” He continues, feeling more and more awkward by the second. “That’s why I was gone for so long. I couldn’t make it sound right, and then Sera gave me some tips, actually, so she really helped me with it, and -” He can’t stand Alastor’s silence anymore, anxiety winning against him, “can you just - can you say *something?”*

Alastor starts at this. His eyes dart back and forth, purposefully avoiding Lucifer’s gaze, and his whole body language has become an indecipherable puzzle.

Eventually, he shoots him an cryptic smile.

“You put in every bit of effort when it matters, don’t you.” Alastor speaks, deliberately evenly. “You really do go all out.”

His stare is laden with meaning, something Lucifer can’t quite piece together yet.

“Well, yeah.” He swallows, and - god. The air is so oppressive. “I needed… *this*… to be perfect.”

“And?”

“And… what?”

“Based on how the rest of today has gone, surely this is not all?” Alastor presses. “You have called me here for a purpose.”

Right. This was all just a drumroll, the buildup to the real reason why he had created all this for Alastor.

And so Lucifer pulls out some folded pieces of paper.

Alastor is a bit awed, to say the least.

He did all this for me? Simply because I… like it?

Alastor had always struck deals with the expectation of receiving something in return. But Lucifer - he gives, and he gives, and he gives. He’s always been this way, helping Alastor in the past just *because,* his unshakeable sincerity catching him off-guard time after time.

It’s part of his allure. Alastor can’t deny it at this point, ~~no matter how much he wants to.~~

And all of a sudden, the world feels rather breathtaking.

(How very unfamiliar.)

Lucifer clears his throat, and he waves the papers in his hand gracelessly. “I wrote down some things to say. But, uh, none of these words seem to make any sense.”

“Is that so?” Alastor stretches his arm to grab it, but Lucifer yanks it out of reach.

“It’s embarrassing, alright? Don’t look at it!”

“Now, now. Those words were meant for *me,* are they not?” Alastor sounds petulant, even to his own ears, and Lucifer looks at him quizzically.

“Woah. Are you… is this your version of pouting?”

“I don’t *pout.”* Alastor narrows his eyes, but this only makes Lucifer laugh, a lovely sound that echoes all around them.

“Okay, okay. My bad. You don’t pout, you just sulk.”

“Well! Don’t you hide in your room whenever you need respite?”

“You hide in your radio tower!”

Alastor growls, unable to retaliate, and so he pivots the topic. “Tell me what you wrote.”

Lucifer’s smile turns into a smaller, nervous grin.

“R…right.” He smooths out his paper worriedly. “Alastor.”

“Yes?”

Lucifer rolls his eyes, but continues.

“I want to tell you something.”

He pauses here, his cheeks turning red; always a welcome sight, in Alastor’s opinion. “Oh god. Oh god oh god oh *god,* this is torture!”

“On the contrary! I am having the time of my life.” Alastor sings. Lucifer sends him an unimpressed look, but then he refers back to his notes.

“To be honest…”

He grips the paper tighter, crinkling it in his hands.

“I’ve gone through a lot of tough situations.”

They’re both absolutely silent at his disclosure. Alastor stands up straighter, his deer ears upright. Listening.

And then Lucifer takes in a breath, steeling himself.

“There’s been some good with the bad, of course. I was pretty damn happy for a while. But then it all disappeared, and I felt like a failure. Even just living, breathing, existing… it was tiring. Really, *really* tiring.”

He sighs at this, before folding the paper in half. Like he’s going off-script.

“But then, things began to look up. I was reunited with my daughter, I finally started sleeping properly, I was helping out with the hotel, and I met some great people.” He pauses here. “And one jackass.”

“And who are you referring to, exactly?” Alastor plays along, which makes Lucifer chuckle.

“He’s charming, and he knows it. Conceited, but for good reason. Geez, Alastor. You were such a pain - actually, you still *are,* by the way.” Lucifer taps his finger on Alastor’s jacket lapel, a gossamer touch.

“Even so… I started liking you. And *everything* in my life has been so difficult. But being with you? Learning about you, and then falling for you?”

His golden eyes fixate on Alastor, piercing and true.

“It’s the easiest thing in the whole world.”

Lucifer confesses gently, softly, barely perceptible even within the silence of the room, but it resounds loudly in Alastor’s mind.

And his breath hitches,

heart stutters,

and he puts his hands down on either side of Lucifer, right onto the stage - leans in, and now there’s only the tiniest margin between them - feels his slight exhale -

“Lucifer,” Alastor breathes out, “you really are something else.”

“So are you.” Lucifer replies, lips tugging into a smile.

Beautiful, Alastor thinks.

And he has no choice but to give in.

He surges forward, momentum so strong he topples Lucifer backwards right onto the stage, and Alastor crawls on top of him to kiss him, capturing his lips in a contact that is so bruising-blistering-burning it sets him on fire and makes him want to tear his jacket off.

Kissing is even better the second time around, and Lucifer tosses his papers in the air, too wrapped up in kissing back to care about keeping things organized. It flutters around them like white flower petals, but Alastor barely even registers this because as his lips are on his -

something’s in the way -

this fucking *bowtie* that Lucifer’s wearing -

Alastor yanks it off in one smooth motion, exposing his pale neck. He touches it with a hand, runs his fingers down the column of his throat, and the memory of tasting Lucifer’s skin floods his mind and now he has a single thought only, *I want a taste, I want it I want it I want it,*

and then his want turns into a need turns into a must -

his tongue darts out, and he slowly licks up Lucifer’s throat.

“W-oah!” Lucifer gasps, hands digging in so hard it tears right through Alastor’s jacket. “Fuck, sorry - your coat - ”

He doesn't even register the apology, and he licks upwards again, drags his tongue as slow as possible. He feels Lucifer's shuddering body underneath him, and it's all so very satisfying, so very delicious. He's wanted to do this since he had a taste of Lucifer's skin up in Heaven, and it's as wonderful as he remembered.

And then -

Lucifer flips him over, forcing *him* onto his back. He's fully sitting on top of Alastor, legs situated on either side of his waist, and he feels a strange sense of déjà vu, reflecting on their counterfeit affair, but Lucifer's actually kissing him this time and it's all real, real, real.

The two of them hurry into grabbing and frantic hands and more and more kissing, the distance between them nonexistent, and Alastor can't think at all-

moves on autopilot - only doing whatever he wants, and what he *wants* is to feel more of Lucifer, so he yanks him down completely, and now their bodies are pressed flush against each other, his hipbones digging into Alastor's abdomen. Lucifer's body is sharp in the most satisfying way, and Alastor sighs out a small moan at the contact.

Lucifer's lithe yet powerful, movements rushed and eager; Alastor skims his fingers against his pink vest, instinctively trying but failing to rip the buttons off.

His clothes are in the way, he thinks absentmindedly, *if only I could remove it -*

"What?" Alastor hisses, surprised by his thought.

"Huh?" Lucifer lifts his head up.

Ah.

So he had spoken aloud.

Alastor lets go, hands dropping to his side like they burned. "It is - nothing for you to concern yourself with."

He speaks calmly, but he pulls away quite conspicuously, averting his gaze the whole time. He can still feel Lucifer on top of him, the warmth from his body equally welcoming and distracting.

(It's admittedly ~~nice~~ to have him there.)

"Want me to get off?" Lucifer looks a little worried, and Alastor is about to say *yes,* but it comes out as:

"You may remain there for… a little while longer."

The whole confession was pretty successful, in Lucifer's opinion. Alastor seemed to like his gift overall, and obviously, kissing him was pre-tty fantastic. He still can't believe that that's something they do now - the two of them, kissing? *What?*

Still though, he's a little worried about Alastor's reaction at the end. Lucifer glimpses over at him; they're sitting on the platform, both with their legs crossed, knees slightly bumping against each other.

"You… we… uh…" Lucifer trails off, not knowing how to bring it up. Shit. How is he *still* like this, even after they've known each other for all these months? Actually, scratch that - it's been almost a year at this point.

Alastor turns to look at him, his crimson eyes unflinching. "Will you ever finish your sentence?"

"I WILL!" Lucifer yells immediately - an automatic reaction. "I just wanted to know if you're okay."

"If I'm *okay?"* Alastor says, sounding disbelieving. "I am always in exemplary condition."

"I know *that,* I mean - at the… end."

His deer ears flatten, and Lucifer hastens to explain himself.

"You can just let me know if it's -"

"I am perfectly *fine,* Lucifer." Alastor says flatly, his tone warning him to drop it. "More than fine. So do not fret about it."

Lucifer opens his mouth, and then closes it. Okay. There's not much more to say, then. Not when Alastor's face shutters like that. Not when he turns away, unwilling to explain.

"Perhaps we should head back separately." Alastor says instead. "It would be far too suspicious if we were to arrive at the same time, hmm?"

Lucifer nods, and he gets up from the floor. It's not a big deal - and it makes sense for them to do that, anyway. He's about to create a portal when he realizes that Alastor is still sitting down on the ground. Staring off into the distance.

He says he's fine, but he doesn't seem to be okay.

After a beat, Lucifer reaches his hand out to him…

… who stares at it, unmoving.

“What’s this now?” Alastor asks, a little perplexed.

“Just… wanted to… help you up?” Lucifer turns his sentence into a question. He can kind of understand Alastor at this point, but he’s still a little bit of an enigma to him. Although Alastor’s always been rather prideful about these things - he never wants to be perceived as weak - surely he knows by now that Lucifer’s not looking down on him.

Right?

Maybe not, because Alastor still gazes at his hand with a strange look on his face. Lucifer sighs, about to put his arm down - but that’s when Alastor lifts his hand up.

And he gestures with it impatiently.

“Well?” Alastor raises an eyebrow. “Be of use to me, then.”

“You just love ordering me around, don’t you.” Lucifer grumbles, but he wraps his fingers around Alastor’s palm. They clasp each other firmly, and even after he helps him up to his feet, they keep their hands together like that.

A lingering touch. Neither of them wanting to separate.

“What’re you waiting for? Get outta here.” Lucifer is the first to let go, because if he doesn’t, he’ll probably do something ridiculous. Like kiss him, or something. And they’ve already kissed once today; he has some doubt that Alastor would want to do it again.

Alastor dithers for a moment, but then nods.

“Leave after ten minutes.”

And then he disappears into his shadow.

Once he’s gone, Lucifer sighs and crouches down. He still has to work on composing the piano accompaniment for him. He's familiar enough with the piano, but unfortunately, he’s not as skilled with it, especially when compared with Alastor.

Oh well. I’ll give it a go.

But at the thought of ‘Alastor,’ he can’t help but think about everything that’s happened tonight. Alastor’s mouth. Alastor’s tongue on his neck. Alastor’s body pressed against his. Alastor Alastor Alastor Alastor Alastor *Alastor* -

“Ohhhhh, god.”

Lucifer runs his hands through his hair, absolutely mortified by his train of thought.

“He’s got me all fucked up.”

It’s with a heavy heart that Alastor teleports back to the hotel - and it’s made especially worse, because he arrives in the middle of one of Charlie’s monologues.

“… so in a few days, we will - oh, Alastor!” Charlie gestures him over. “Great timing. I have some exciting news for the hotel! But first, have you seen my dad?”

“I don’t recall being his caretaker.” Alastor replies breezily. He walks over to stand beside Husk, who gives him a look of confusion.

“The hell happened to your jacket?”

Alastor glances down, and - oh, right. Lucifer had torn it with his bare hands, leaving rips that extend from his shoulders to his chest. He snaps his fingers, whisking his overcoat away to his bedroom.

“Oh, I just got into a scuffle. Nothing I couldn’t handle! I shall mend it later.”

Husk still seems suspicious, but not enough to continue questioning him. They all turn to look at Charlie, whose enthusiasm spills out of her like unbridled sunshine.

“Sooo, like I mentioned, we actually got a few people interested in the hotel! They’re these, tiny little… they’re like Niffty-sized.” Charlie points to Niffty, who beams at the attention. “All these months without anyone coming, and now we’ve *finally* got a few sinners!”

“That’s wonderful, babe.” Vaggie smiles. “What should we do, then?”

“I was thinking… why don’t we show them around, let them enjoy themselves, but also think of some ways to all bond and have fun together? If we lead some different exercises for them, they can slowly learn how to be better people.”

“The only exercise I do, Charlie, is in the bedroom.” Angel Dust sounds rather miffed. “Ya better not be thinkin’ of having us work all day. That wouldn’t be fun for those little Niffty demons, either.”

“No, of course not! And they don’t actually look like Niffty - they’re just around her height.” Charlie insists. “I don’t want to scare them away! I just think that if we show them the ropes, it would be easier for them to get used to Hell. We’ll figure out the self-improvement part later.”

“Oh, Charlie. Are you finally embarking on your hopeless plan?” Alastor cackles at this. “What a hilarious notion!”

“Hilarious or not, Alastor, can you pitch in this time?” Charlie asks, and Vaggie elbows her.

“He works here, Charlie. Just order him to do it.”

“No need for orders!” Alastor twirls his radio cane. “I will contribute. I am rather fascinated by what useless scheme you have cooked up this time, my dear.”

It’s the truth, at least. He’s stuck around the hotel for this long - why not watch and see how Charlie’s plans unfurl?

“Thank… you?” She says unsurely, and then turns to the rest of the hotel staff. “Okay! See you later, everyone. I’ll hand out a schedule once I’m done making one. For now, let’s clean up the place!”

Chapter End Notes

I really love that you said it was romantic when Alastor was strangling demons omg

FAQ:
- I know Alastor and Charlie made a deal in season 1, but since they didn’t say what it is, I will not be talking about it in this fic. Just imagine that it never happened LOL

Fun Facts:
- Alastor likes to order Lucifer around (ch. 12, 13)
- Since they performed together at Mimzy’s Club (ch. 7, 8) I thought it would be good for Lucifer to perform for him at a jazz club here!
- Sera helping out with music writing is from (ch. 25)
- Fake making out is from (ch. 18 - 19)
- Lucifer hides in his room when he's struggling (ch. 6)
- Alastor also left to his radio tower when he's thinking (ch. 8, 11)
- Casino party is from (ch. 15 - 16)

Thanks always, see you next Friday! Leave theories/suggestions in comments <3

The Newcomers

Chapter Notes

CH. 29 FANART:
- drawn by: @dirtgrubber
- drawn by: @stelliapopcorn
- drawn by: @myntesuniverse
- drawn by: @xxartbunnyxx

Thank you!!! Reach me on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Oh my gosh, welcome welcome welcome!" Charlie greets her new recruits with gusto. There's only three sinners at the front door, but it's still an improvement compared to the number of guests before (zero).

"T - thanks." One of them responds. The other two hide behind her back, and Charlie swoons at the sight.

"Aw, you're all so cute. Happy first day! Come join us in the parlour. I'll introduce you to everyone!"

She ushers them in, and Lucifer has to look down to see their faces. They're really quite tiny, only reaching up to his knees.

"This is Lucifer." She gestures towards him. "He's the King of Hell, so if you run into any issues, he'll help you out! He's also my dad."

"Charmed, I'm sure." Lucifer tips his hat towards them. They do a hybrid bow/curtsy/nod, like they don't know how to greet him. "Oh, uh - you don't need to do all that!"

"And this is Alastor!" Charlie barrels onwards. "He may be an overlord, but he's also the facility manager!"

Alastor looks uninterested, although he does address them. "Quite a pleasure to be meeting you. If you require something from me, I am always happy to make a deal."

"Don't make a deal with him." Vaggie warns.

"And this is my girlfriend, Vaggie. She's the manager here -"

"And I'm Niffty!" Niffty jumps in. "I clean. And I cook!"

Charlie looks around, trying to find the rest of the staff. “I guess Angel Dust and Husk aren’t around, so I’ll introduce you to them later. Why don’t I take you on a tour of the hotel today?”

“O - okay.” One of them squawks, clearly overwhelmed. Charlie pauses here, and she smiles at them kindly.

“Maybe a smaller group should lead? Does anyone want to stay behind?”

Lucifer glances at Alastor, waiting to see what his next move is. It’s hard to get a read on him today - should they go together? Should they separate? What’s the right choice here? He gets his answer when Alastor taps on his shoulder with his radio cane, careful to maintain a distance between them.

“Perhaps you should stay, then?” Alastor says blithely. “I will accompany Charlie, as I have a *far* more important role compared to yours!”

So he chose fighting, huh? That’s easy enough.

“HAH!” Lucifer laughs insincerely. “Go ahead and take the day off. Charlie, dear, I’ll go with you!”

“There’s no need! Only the *superior* hotel staff should attend.”

“Well, I know this place like the back of my hand! I rebuilt it, after all.”

“How unnecessary! It's not as though Charlie asked you to go with.”

“Wha - she didn’t ask *you,* either!”

At their raised voices, one of the demons turns to look at Charlie nervously, and she tries to remedy it.

“OKAY! I’ve made up my mind. Dad, Alastor, you two stay in the parlour. *We* will take them on a tour.”

“Oh.” Lucifer feels a little like she put them in time-out. “Y- yeah, of course. Whatever you want.”

They both watch as Charlie hands out maps to the demons. She then gives a brief description of the hotel; she sounds very professional, as though she practiced beforehand.

“Okay! So that’s what we do here in a nutshell. Let’s show you around now - OH WAIT! I have some gifts for you!”

As Charlie passes each sinner a welcome basket, Vaggie turns to Lucifer, her voice hushed and discrete.

“Good thing those demons we spoke with didn’t come, right, sir?”

“Who?”

Vaggie furrows her eyebrows. “The… the ones who asked which room you’re in?”

“Oh! Yeah.” Lucifer pretty much forgot about them. “Those people. I wonder what happened?”

“Well, good riddance, anyway.”

“C’mon, Vaggie! Let’s go!” Charlie shouts. Vaggie hurries towards her, and the three of them guide the demons towards a hallway, their backs disappearing once they turn the corner.

Alastor glances at Lucifer.

Lucifer glances at Alastor.

And now he’s faced with two dialogue options:

OPTION A: Ignore Alastor
OPTION B: Speak with Alastor

He selects **OPTION B.**

Lucifer looks around, double-checking to see if they’re alone. Funnily enough, Alastor seems to have the same idea, based on how his eyes scour the premises. When they’re both certain that the hotel is empty, Alastor broaches an unexpected topic.

“Exactly *how* many sinners did you speak with, while you were promoting the hotel?”

Alastor’s tone is quite taut. Lucifer tilts his head, a little confused by his inquiry.

“Not much. I think we only met one group.”

“And what did they look like?”

“Uh, what?”

“What-did-they-look-like?” Alastor repeats, his voice sounding tenser, if that was possible. Lucifer’s seriously bewildered, but he answers the question anyway.

“They were super big and tall,” he gets on his tiptoes to demonstrate, “and there was a bunch of ‘em.”

Alastor taps his chin thoughtfully. “Ah. *Those* pesky demons.”

“Friends of yours?”

“What a preposterous notion.” Alastor’s eyes narrow. “I merely got rid of them.”

“Huh? You did?” And now his confusion turns to surprise. “Why? Did they piss you off?”

“Somewhat.”

Alastor’s quiet after that, like he’s lost in thought. He barely even moves, actually, so still he looks rooted to the spot.

Oh. Is the conversation over? Lucifer thinks. He starts to inch away, wanting to give him space-

- but then Alastor grabs his arm, his red fingers wrapping around his bicep gingerly. Lucifer looks at where he’s holding him, and then back up at his crimson eyes.

“Leaving so soon?” Alastor sounds casual, but his words are rather accusatory. “Come with me for a moment.”

“To where?”

Alastor gestures his head towards the balcony. “Out there.”

He drops his hold from Lucifer’s arm (unfortunately). Although they’ve only been touching for a few seconds, he finds that he misses the warmth of Alastor’s hand, and he has to grab onto his own wrist to prevent himself from reaching out.

“S… sure.”

When they make it outside, Lucifer leans his back against the balcony railing, watching as Alastor locks the door behind them.

“You’re acting kinda suspicious.” Lucifer notes. “Did you bring me out here to kill me?”

“Such nonsense.” Alastor strides over to him, and they stand side-by-side. “That wouldn’t benefit me in any way! You are *much* more useful to me alive.”

“Wow, thanks.” Lucifer says sarcastically. “Well, what is it, then?”

He can feel Alastor gazing at him cautiously; he always looks preoccupied these days, as though deciding whether he should say something or not.

Alastor chooses to speak, this time.

“I overheard them.”

“The demons?” Lucifer inquires, and Alastor nods.

“They were coming up with a ploy to…”

Alastor grips the gold railing tightly, and it’s with great difficulty that he says:

“To bed you.”

Lucifer snaps his head to look at him - which is a mistake, because *god,* Alastor’s intense stare feels like it’ll crush him into oblivion. He immediately averts his eyes, and tries to laugh

it off.

“Oh! Uh… really? I mean, they did seem a little dodgy.”

“That is a bit of an understatement, don’t you think?” Alastor’s tone is decidedly unaffected. But when Lucifer peeks over, he can see his eye twitch a little. From irritation.

Or is it jealousy?

Nah. Can’t be, Lucifer thinks. *Still…*

Alastor seems bothered, for some reason. Lucifer drums his fingers on the railing, thinking of how to lift his mood up. Maybe by saying something stupid? Something that’ll make Alastor send him a snide reply, *you think much too highly of yourself,* and so on and so forth.

“Waaaaaaiiiiiit…” He laughs, and turns towards Alastor. “Is that why you got rid of them? ‘Cause you wanted me all to yourself?”

CRACK!

Alastor snaps the banister with his bare hands. Not the kind of reaction Lucifer was going for, absolutely *not* what he was anticipating, and Alastor slowly turns to face him. Smile tensing. Eyes flashing. Words gritting out from clenched teeth,

“And so what if I do?”

Oh.

He… didn’t expect him to say that.

Lucifer flushes a little, and in contrast, Alastor almost looks ill at his disclosure, an unhealthy pallor settling over his face. His hands are still strangling the broken railing, and so Lucifer looks around surreptitiously,

before placing his hand atop of his.

The size difference is almost comical; his hand barely even covers Alastor’s. But at the physical contact, Alastor eases his death grip infinitesimally. Lucifer squeezes his hand in a hopefully reassuring way.

“You know nothing would have happened, right? I’d beat the shit out of them if they tried anything.”

“Is that so?” Although Alastor sounds completely indifferent, his posture relaxes just a smidge.

“Yeah. No one’s gonna want to mess with *this* guy!” Lucifer jabs a thumb at himself, and a small chuckle escapes from Alastor’s mouth.

Finally - he looks more like himself again.

“How *very* intimidating.” Alastor leans in; his face is so close Lucifer can see the shadows cast by his eyelashes. “Watching you put some sinners in their place? I would have enjoyed seeing that immensely.”

“Point them out to me, then. I’ll go kick their ass now.”

Alastor lets out an actual laugh this time. It’s harsh; jarring; yet ultimately, very infectious, and they both snicker in the open air.

“Well, is that… anything else on your mind?” Lucifer asks. He’s dying to know if they’re okay after the whole Jazz Club Incident™. Alastor seems a little unbalanced by it, but Lucifer can only hazard a guess at what he’s thinking.

“Oh, my mind is perpetually busy. Unlike yours, which is empty as always!”

Alastor taps Lucifer’s forehead to accentuate his point. He scowls at the touch, but doesn’t make a move to remove Alastor’s hand.

“What the - I have thoughts up there!”

"If you say so." Alastor sounds like he doesn't believe him at all. “Well! I shall bid you farewell here. Since Charlie does not require my aid, I will depart for the day.”

And so he slinks away into his shadow, disappearing without even offering a kiss or a hug or even a wave. Lucifer looks around, trying to see if he’ll pop back in, but he doesn’t. He’s just gone.

Okay, whatever, *fine.* Alastor will come back and talk to him some other day.

Except -

that’s the last time they see each other for a while.

“Dad?” Charlie knocks on the door to the music room. “Are you doing okay? Want some lunch?”

There’s a stumbling sound, footsteps, and then Lucifer throws the door open. “Charlie! I would love that. Come in, come in.”

She follows him in, and looks around the room. He has the lid to the red piano propped open, clearly in the middle of playing. There's a bunch of handwritten music sheets that are sprawled across the piano rack; after she sets the tray of food down on a table, she picks up one of the pages.

“Oooh! What song is this?”

“Oh! Uh, don’t look at that.” Lucifer hastily yanks it out of her hands, and then starts stacking the rest of the pages together. “It's a piano accompaniment. I’m not done yet, though.”

“Is that why you’ve been in here for the past few… days?” Charlie asks carefully. He’s been tucked in the room for a while, only texting her when he’s bored. Like right now. Lucifer sets the song aside, and sits down on the piano bench.

“Yeah, sorta. It’s not going very well though.” He sighs, and swivels to face the keyboard. “Do you know anyone who’s good at the piano? Besides-”

“-Alastor.” Charlie finishes his sentence. “Why don’t you ask him, dad?”

“I, well.” Lucifer taps his fingers on his knees nervously. “I don’t think so, kiddo.”

Did Alastor do something? Charlie thinks worriedly. She really shouldn’t stick her nose into her dad’s business too much, but it’s hard not to care. Lucifer appears to be a bit out of sorts; he starts to play a few notes on the piano, indicating that their conversation was over.

Charlie leaves and closes the door behind her, quiet as a mouse, but her mind goes a mile a minute.

In the next few days, Alastor purposefully avoids Lucifer; instead, he accompanies Charlie on her absurd quest to rehabilitate her new guests. He doesn’t actually help in any way, because he’s simply using them as a distraction from his thoughts.

Of which he has many. *Far* too many.

It's quite tedious that even after going steady with Lucifer, Alastor grapples with how to deal with his self control. It's slipping slipping slipping, like trying to cup water in his palms, trickling out between his fingers.

Even worse, he feels retroactively abashed by his actions from the jazz club, and he doesn't know how to deal with either the twisting in his heart or the heat pooling in his stomach. Thinking about it makes his body ache, and he places his hand on his forehead. He needs ~~Lucifer~~

He needs *a moment.*

"Soooo, I know Hell can seem bad, but it's all about what you make of it!" Charlie says animatedly. She's speaking to the sinners in a makeshift classroom, and she's at the front of the room with a blackboard. It's just her and Angel Dust running the workshop today, the latter sitting at the back row of the room. "I mean, Alastor, you like it down here, right?"

He hadn't been paying attention, but he manages to pick up the last part of her sentence. "Indeed! I do so enjoy hearing the screams of my victims."

The demons shrink at this, and Charlie's smile resembles more of a grimace.

"O-kay! Not a great example. But, um, *I* love it down here! This is my home."

Charlie draws on the board with chalk, and she makes little sketches of everyone from the hotel.

"Everyone has good traits and bad traits inside of them. But honestly? Trying to figure out if something is 'good' is hard! It depends on how you want to live your life, and how your actions affect the people around you." Charlie places the chalk down. "For example, Angel has changed so much, just by being here!"

"Yeah, baby. I'm finally clean and sober!" Angel Dust says proudly. "But Charlie, you forgot to mention one thing."

"What's that?"

"Hell is FUN! There's a ton of stuff we can do!"

"Like what?" One of the demons ask.

"I know a few places where a guy can blow off steam. Why don't I take ya?" Under Charlie's careful eye, he quickly says: "I'll show you *wholesome* things, okay?"

"That sounds nice, actually. Can we go?"

The sinners all turn to look at Charlie, who nods hesitantly.

"Um… yeah! Okay, why not? Thank you, Angel."

"Alright, Niffty-demons. Let's go!"

“Again, Angel, they’re not actually *Niffty* demons, they’re just - ”

“Yeah, yeah.” Angel Dust scoops them up into his six arms, and carries them out of the classroom like they’re practically weightless. It’s just Alastor and Charlie now, which is not an ideal situation for him.

I suppose I shall have to find something else to occupy my time, Alastor thinks. He’s about to get up from his chair when Charlie stands over him, her shadow looming ominously.

Ah. As he had expected. Charlie wants to meddle with him, somehow.

“Did you need something?” Alastor smiles at her insincerely.

“Alastor, thank you sooo much for joining us these days!” She claps her hands together. “But… um… I have a question.”

“And that is?”

She takes in a breath.

"Did you and my dad get into a fight?”

Alastor stiffens at this. “Hmm. Why do you ask?”

“He’s been stuck in the music room for a while. He seems kinda… out of it?” Charlie says worriedly. “All he does is practice the piano.”

“What was that? Did you say the *piano?”*

Lucifer’s certainly musically adept, but Alastor has yet to hear him perform that specific instrument.

“Yeah. He looks mopey. Do you know what’s going on?”

“Mopey?” and now Alastor’s eyebrows shoot all the way up to his forehead.

“It happened right after you came back, Alastor. So I figured… not that it has to be related to you!” Charlie says hastily. “It could be anything, really.”

Alas, it probably *is* due to him, isn’t it? He intentionally made his presence rather scarce for the past few days. He laces his fingers underneath his chin, and looks up at Charlie pensively.

Thinking on his own had been a fruitless venture, and he’d be damned if he had to refer to literature again. If he could speak with someone about this (as circuitously as possible), it could potentially be… helpful.

“Your father and I did not engage in a fight.”

“Oh, okay! That’s good - ”

“However.” Alastor cuts in. “Perhaps you can be of assistance.”

“Oh!” Charlie’s eyes light up. “I would *love* to help!”

She pulls up a chair in front of him and sits down, her expression expectant, and Alastor ponders over how to phrase it indirectly.

“He has been… hmm. He did something.”

“What ‘something’?”

Something is referring to the jazz club, the song, the confession, the kissing that stoked a flame within him. But he would rather get tortured mercilessly than admit all of that to her.

“Oh, Charlie. That information is none of your concern! All I need from you is a simple answer.” Alastor pinches her cheek, and then lets go. “Am I supposed to return the action in kind?”

Charlie waits for him to elaborate, which he never does. They stare at each other silently for who-knows-how-long before she lets out an uncomfortable cough.

“Well, if he did something bad, I don’t think you should argue and fight back. How does that saying go again… oh, yeah! An eye for an eye makes the world go blind. From Gandhi!”

“And if it’s something good?” Alastor prompts.

“Is it good?”

“That’s rather irrelevant.”

Charlie thinks about it for a while. “Knowing dad, you don’t owe him anything. He’s not the type to do stuff just so he can get something in return.”

Well. He knew *that* much about him, at least. Alastor still feels rather antsy, but Charlie’s sparkling eyes are too much to handle at the moment.

“Soooo, will you two make up now -”

“As I already mentioned, we did not *fight.”* Alastor interjects before she goes off on another tangent. “But you have given me some things to think about.”

Namely, what to do next.

“Any updates with Alastor?” Angel Dust asks. He’s writing a new note down on the board: *Lucifer = missing bowtie?*

“Y’know, he did come back with a ripped jacket.” Husk puts down his newspaper, looking at the cork board with apathy. “But who knows. That could be from anyone.”

“Well… they haven’t been talking to each other these days.” Charlie sighs. “But! I think I helped Alastor a little. So maybe I can help out a *lot* now.”

“What will you do then, princess?” Rosie’s voice sounds tinny from the video call, and Charlie leans down to speak with her.

“I’ll pair them up for an activity! That way, they’ll have no choice but to talk to each other.”

“Can you guess today’s event?” Charlie’s practically bouncing on her heels from excitement. “First person to guess correctly gets a priiiiiiiiize!”

They’re all standing in a giant ballroom in the hotel; the floor-to-ceiling windows lets in a stream of natural light, bathing their surroundings in a rosy glow. A black grand piano is tucked away in the corner, where Razzle is seated and ready to perform.

“Ooh! Me! Me!” Niffty jumps in the air. “Are we dancing?”

“That’s right! Here’s your prize!”

Charlie tucks a white flower into Niffty’s hair, and she spins around happily.

“Oh? How very elegant.” Alastor sounds rather genuine. “And what dance style shall it be, Charlie?”

“I’m thinking the waltz!” She pulls Vaggie to her chest, and they dance in place for a bit. “It’s beautiful and romanti- er, graceful! So I thought it might be fun for all of us.”

“I don’t know how to dance.” One of the demons says quietly. Charlie lets go of Vaggie and crouches down, smiling at him encouragingly.

“That’s okay! It’s a dance lesson. Which will be helpful for me, too! I haven’t done this in so long, I need a refresher.”

Lucifer knows that she’s lying just to make the demons feel better, but it works - they all visibly ease up at her comment. Charlie waves a hand at Razzle, and he starts playing a dreamy waltz, *oom cha-cha, oom cha-cha…*

“Dad,”

Charlie grabs his hand,

“Alastor,”

she grasps his arm,

“Since you two are such great dancers, could you teach us today?”

Somehow, it feels clearly orchestrated. Alastor and Lucifer look at each other from the corner of their eyes, with Charlie in-between. It’s the first time he’s seen Alastor in exactly four days.

So that’s four kisses, Lucifer thinks automatically, and then he inwardly groans, *god, now’s not the time for that.*

“Dance lesson?” He echoes. “Is that something that helps people become, well. Nicer?”

“It’ll teach us to trust each other! You know, don’t step on each other’s toes, don’t trip and fall…”

As Charlie lists out more reasons, Lucifer peeks over at him, checking to see his reaction. Alastor doesn’t seem bothered or anything; he merely lifts an eyebrow, as though issuing a challenge.

Fine. If that’s how he wants to play it.

“I’ll lead, then.” Lucifer shoots him a cocky grin, and Alastor shakes his head.

“I’d rather not be subjected to your terrible dancing. You are an *awful* leader. Allow me!”

Lucifer scowls, and he takes a step closer to him. In response, Alastor shakes off Charlie’s hand to step into his personal space, and they glower at each other.

“Nope! I’ll lead.” Lucifer insists.

“I shall lead.” Alastor counters.

“I’ll lead.”

“I shall.”

“I’ll -”

“For fuck’s sake, *someone* lead!” Husk groans. Alastor jerks his head up at this, momentarily distracted, and Lucifer takes the opportunity to grab his hand -

pull him in close -

set his own hand on Alastor’s waist, and grin at him triumphantly. Alastor looks at him, wide-eyed, but he settles his hand delicately on Lucifer’s arm. The role of the follower.

“Looks like I’ll lead.” Lucifer says smugly. Alastor’s expression flickers to annoyance.

“Hmm. How regrettable. Instruct, then.”

They stand in the centre of the room, with Razzle continuing to play the piano, the beat a continuous *one-two-three, one-two-three, one-two-three.* There’s a height difference between him and Alastor, but as this is the third time they’ll dance together, he’s gotten pretty accustomed to it.

“I’ll show you how to do the box step first.” Lucifer calls out.

He’s pretty familiar with the moves, and so he goes through the motions without a problem. Alastor keeps up smoothly - as expected, if he’s being honest.

It’s kind of nice, actually. All of them, together like this, enjoying the warm afternoon sun; dancing to the tune of the playful piano; hearing their footsteps, echoing in the ballroom.

Everyone seems to get the hang of it after a while, and Lucifer pauses here, running through what to teach them next. *The twinkle, the promenade, and then the chassé…*

“This is fine and all, but where’s the drama?” Angel Dust’s voice rings out from across the room, where he’s dancing with a mildly reluctant Husk. “Can ya show us a dip or somethin’?”

“A dip?” Lucifer says thoughtfully. “Yeah, sure. I’m pretty good at those.”

“But *I* am better.” Alastor sings.

Without a warning, he drops their hands and forces Lucifer to grab onto his arm, making it so that *Alastor* leads instead. It’s so seamless that Lucifer immediately steps into the follower position, albeit with some indignation.

“Wha - hey!” He protests, but Alastor ignores him. His hand is clasped onto Lucifer’s waist securely, the pressure making his heart beat a little harder.

“Shall I demonstrate?” Alastor says brightly. He spins him in place gracefully, and then snakes his arm around Lucifer’s waist in a secure fashion. “Right arm around your partner’s waist, left hand on the back…”

And then Alastor dips him with a flourish, his arms holding Lucifer firmly. His red hair cascades downwards, and it conceals both of their faces.

Like they’re hiding from the others.

Alastor whispers into his ear,

“Your favourite part, hmm?”

And then he pulls him up in one fluid movement. His hands linger on Lucifer’s body. (Is he hesitating to let go?)

But he does, in the end, and it’s over in an instant. Lucifer can’t even react until he hears a smattering of applause, and he turns to look at the hotel residents.

“Woah!” One of the demons says. “That was really good.”

“Oh, there is much room for improvement. For Lucifer, that is!” Alastor says snidely. “Niffty, come and be my partner for the rest of the afternoon. I would like to pair up with someone who can *actually* dance.”

All the fuzzy feelings Lucifer has towards him vanishes immediately, and he lets out a huff.

“Yeah? Your footwork is a mess! Charlie, dear, come over here and we’ll show him how it’s done.”

“Um, let’s not make this into a contest - ”

But it’s too late, and they spend the rest of the afternoon engaged in the least relaxing waltz session of all time.

“You all looked *so* amazing dancing today!” Charlie hands each of the demons an itinerary, and she gestures towards the front door. “Since you’ve spent the past few days at the hotel, I

thought it'd be nice if we went to explore the Pride Ring."

"Sure." The smallest sinner looks at the agenda, and she perks up at the list. "Oh, this looks fun!"

As Lucifer is about to leave the hotel with them, Charlie quickly shakes her head. "Dad, Al, you two stay here."

"You don't want us to go with you?"

She lowers her voice so that only Lucifer can hear her.

"You two are a *little* too competitive right now. I think you're tiring the new guests out."

Lucifer glances over at the demons, who do seem rather fatigued. "Oh! Uh… sorry, Charlie."

"No, it's okay! Just, stay here and, you know. Relax. Talk to each other. Or don't! Noooo pressure." She says quickly. He furrows his eyebrows, a little skeptical, but nods anyway.

"Anything you want, Charlie."

The second the doors shut, Lucifer turns to Alastor.

"Do you get the sense that she's trying to leave us together?"

"Perhaps." Alastor turns this over in his head. "She *did* ask me if we were in a quarrel. This may be her very roundabout way of getting us to be on cordial terms."

"Wait - did you tell her we were in a fight?"

Alastor lets out a long-suffering sigh. "Of course not. But what can I say? Charlie sees whatever she wants to see."

"I mean, she's pretty distracted with the new guests." Lucifer says, reflecting on the day's activities. "Y'know, those sinners aren't too bad. I was kinda afraid of how they'd act and all, but they ended up okay."

"Ah, yes. They are quite docile." Alastor smirks at him. "If they had been as argumentative as *you,* I would have strangled them to death."

"And if they had been anything like *you,* I would have kicked them out." Lucifer shoots back.

"How serendipitous that they are nothing like us, then."

"Yeah."

They stand there in silence - something that started to happen more often than not. He takes the opportunity to examine Alastor, and he looks like the very picture of health. As good as usual. So why was he gone for so long?

“Haven’t seen you in a while.” Lucifer finally says. Alastor nods, his smile dimming.

“Indeed. Although, it’s still a shorter duration compared to your departure.” He seems irked by the thought. “Your journey up to Heaven was quite inconvenient!”

“Wait, really?” Lucifer says, surprised. “Did Charlie need me for something? A task, or whatever?”

Alastor harrumphs at his question, and Lucifer gets the feeling that he’s sulking again.

“It was quite inconvenient for *me.”*

Every now and then, Alastor drops a sentence like this. Honest. A little more heartfelt. It makes Lucifer want to blush furiously, and he can already feel his face warming up, *uh-oh.*

“Oh yeah?” Lucifer grins, trying to cover up his embarrassment with bravado; he stands in front of Alastor, who is pointedly avoiding eye contact with him. “Did *you* need me for something?”

He finally gazes at him, his vermillion eyes carefully unreadable.

“I…”

He wrestles with finishing his sentence,

“I had…”

and then he lights up, as though he came up with an idea.

“There was a slight pain in my chest. Perhaps your powers could have come in handy.”

“Wait - really?” All cheekiness disappears from Lucifer’s voice, and he leans in worriedly. “What’s wrong?”

“Nothing is *wrong.”* Alastor says immediately. But when he sees the anxiety on Lucifer’s face, he sighs, and gives way. “I merely have a bit of a scar left from Adam.”

Alastor touches his own chest and drags his fingers down to his abdomen, miming where the scar is located. Lucifer stretches his hand out, but stops right before he makes contact with Alastor’s torso.

“You still have a scar? What? That shouldn’t have happened - ”

and then Lucifer actually thinks back on the whole event. The radio tower. Alastor’s hand. The momentary peace between the two of them.

“Oh. Wait. I know why now. To heal the whole thing, I have to touch the actual area. But I held your hand instead, ’cause *somebody* refused to take his shirt off.”

Alastor blinks,

once,

twice,

and then his smile widens.

“Oh? Were you *that* desperate to remove my clothes?”

His voice is ever-teasing, and Lucifer feels his face burn with renewed vigour. “I’m - that’s not what I -” Fuck, he’s so flustered that he can’t even form a coherent sentence. He inhales deeply, trying to get his scrambled thoughts together.

“Look, that’s how this healing shit works, okay?! I bet if I healed you now, shirt off and everything, it’ll be completely back to normal!”

Alastor’s deer ears lift up.

“Is that a proposal, then?”

Lucifer reels back at this. *“What?”*

“To heal me perfectly.” Alastor reiterates. Lucifer gawks at him, and a brief vision of a shirtless Alastor flashes through his head - he digs his fingers into his palm, *god,* he needs to stop.

“Offer’s available.” He manages to say. Not that Alastor would take him up on that, anyway. Like hell he'd want to -

“This pesky scar *is* a bit of a bother.”

What? Lucifer thinks. Alastor looks at him thoughtfully, and then slowly nods.

“Very well."

Alastor leans in,

and Lucifer holds his breath.

"I shall make my request, then.” He says, sotto voce.

“Heal me.”

Chapter End Notes

It’s been 6 months of me writing OSAS omg I’m just going to take some time to work on radioapple/OSAS stuff, so the next update is in 2 weeks! Mark your calendars for Aug. 30.

I need you to know that I’ve been dying to write the next chapter for MONTHS!! Topless healing scene my beloved... finally 🙏 Mild HEAT warning next time! Friendly reminder that this is a T+ fic so nothing, uh, 'improper' will happen LOL

FAQ:
- Alastor will not make deer noises in this fic. Have you heard what they sound like? It’s not very cute looool

Fun Facts:
- Lucifer mentioned that the dip was his favourite part in (ch. 19)
- Lucifer mentioned that he thinks about Alastor (ch. 22)
- Alastor’s wound from Adam was healed in (ch. 5) but he still has the scar (ch. 24)
- Also, Lucifer used his request to heal Alastor in (ch. 5) so I wanted Alastor to ask for it this time - parallels! But yeah, they held hands at the time to heal.
- Alastor used literature/self-help books before to help with romance (ch. 21)
- They danced the Charleston (ch. 10), the polka (ch. 13), and now the waltz! If you have time, check out the dances on YouTube. They’re quite different from each other!

ALSO DOES ALASTOR HAVE CHEST FLUFF YES OR NO? Please let me know in the comments!!

The Request

Chapter Notes

CH. 30 FANART:
- comic by @dirtgrubber: 1 + 2
- drawn by @19Gioia93: 1 + 2
- drawn by: @xxartbunnyxx
- drawn by: @broomballade
- drawn by: @Hampt3r_

Thank you! Send via Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

They enter Alastor's room to commence the healing process, and Lucifer looks around. It feels like a lifetime has passed since he last stepped foot here. Not much has changed, except…

"Woah! Is this all my stuff?"

Lucifer walks over to the bookcase and inspects a single shelf, which only houses a few things:

1. Rubber ducks (one Alastor-shaped, one Lucifer-shaped)
2. The red radio (which he had purchased a while back)
3. A red and white feather (is that… his?)

"Wow. A corner just for me, huh?" Lucifer teases, but he feels rather pleased. He picks up the feather curiously, and notes that it's still in pristine condition.

"Well! It still pales in comparison with your altar. How many of my items have you collected at this point?" Alastor counters.

"Not an altar."

"What else would you call it, then?"

"An…" For the life of him, Lucifer can't think of a better word to describe it. "Y'know what? It's none of your business."

"I do believe it *is* my business. They are my belongings, after all!"

"Well, they're MINE now! And-" Lucifer stops and clears his throat; if he doesn't focus, they'll end up arguing all day. "Okay. Enough about that. So, healing?"

Alastor's expression does a complete 180, going from playful to guarded in an instant.

"Indeed." The grip on his radio cane tightens. "But before we begin, I do have a question for you."

Lucifer tilts his head at this. "Oh. Shoot."

Alastor doesn't ask immediately, instead choosing to stare into the crackling fireplace. The flames make his eyes reflect an emerald green, almost eerie in colour.

It's after an agonizingly long silence before he turns back to Lucifer.

"Why did you heal me in the first place?" Alastor asks. "We were merely acquaintances. I asked you this, once."

He pauses, and his voice lowers to a quieter register.

"But you never answered."

Lucifer stares at him, a bit surprised at his question. "You wanna know why?"

Alastor nods, and so he deliberates over the best way to respond. Every reason that crosses his brain feels too much; too heavy; too loaded. It would be off-putting, wouldn't it? If he admitted how much he cared, even back when they barely knew each other?

He swallows down all his unspoken words, and says:

"Well, I mean. It's an easy enough thing for me to do."

Alastor's deer ears flatten.

"Is that all? How very dull."

The radio powers up in the meantime, as though Alastor subconsciously turned it on, and it's a slow song - melancholic in atmosphere.

Shit. I made a misstep, didn't I?

Lucifer grips the edge of his own shirt nervously. He'd rather make a fool of himself than to make Alastor look like… that. The subtle look of disheartenment, concealed in his signature smile.

"That's… not all." He confesses. "I helped you because. Well. The things that we did together - playing music, rebuilding the room, fighting against the Vees - I could see that you… you're kind of a jerk, but…"

He trails off here; it's painfully embarrassing to say this, actually. But Alastor seems captivated by his fragmented sentences, and so he takes a breath before carrying on.

“It’s fun talking to you.” He can feel his face heat up, *fantastic.* “I can admit that now, okay? It’s not everyday you meet someone where the conversation just flows. Even if all we did was - *is* - argue. And… it’d be a shame if we couldn’t talk anymore."

Alastor gazes at him, his red eyes burning like a flame, and he resolutely meets his stare.

“So I healed you.”

Lucifer takes a step towards him.

“And so you did.”

Alastor walks to him, as well.

He lifts up a hand to place it onto his own bow-tie, idly toying with the ends. “I shall return your compliment, then.”

His ever-present smile softens.

(Just a bit.)

“You have always made for a fine conversational partner, Lucifer.”

And Alastor slips his bow-tie off.

Angel Dust watches over the small demons as they walk around the streets of Hell. One of them window-shops for a moment, before entering a clothing store.

“I can’t believe Charlie left us to babysit her guests, *and* to hand out these goddamn flyers!” He waves a pamphlet around indignantly. “Her and her stupid errands.”

“Complain all you want, but you don’t seem to really hate it.” Husk points out. He groans, unable to refute it.

“Fine. Charlie’s nice enough. And I guess those demons are kinda cute. I haven’t danced like that in a while, too.” Angel Dust brightens up at this. “Speaking of dancin’, did you see that *dip* with Alastor and Lucifer? I should be a professional matchmaker or something!”

“Angel. They argued before, during, and after the dance.” Husk says dryly. “I think you’ve got a long way ahead of you.”

“Oh, fuck you. You’ll see.”

He gets momentarily distracted as he observes the small sinner through the window. She’s rifling through some long, fluffy coats, but a shadowy figure approaches her, someone really familiar, someone…

“Oh, shit! Ain't that Val? He’s always bad news - and he’s fucking *talkin’* to her now!” He grabs Husk’s shoulder impatiently. “C’mon, let’s go rescue her.”

They hurry into the store, and Angel Dust catches the tail end of Valentino’s sentence. “… you’re beautiful. Why don’t you work with me? Just sign the contract, and I’ll make you the most famous person in all of Hell.”

“N - no thanks.” She sounds a little shaken. “I’m with the Hazbin Hotel, so there’s no need.”

“The what?” Valentino furrows his eyebrows. “Did you say the Hazbin Hotel? Why would you even want to be there?”

“They… they’re nice to me.” She raises her voice, which draws the attention of a few inquisitive people. “And I don’t want to be contracted to you! They promised they’d protect me!”

“Really? And where are they now?” Valentino drawls. Angel Dust takes this as his cue to jump in front of her, with Husk sliding in beside him.

“Fuck off, Val!” Angel Dust snaps. “She said no!”

Valentino recoils in surprise. “Holy shit, Angel Dust? What are you doing here?”

“Havin’ a good time on my day off, until I saw *your* nasty face.” Angel Dust sneers. Valentino looks at him with thinly-concealed displeasure, but he lets out a sarcastic laugh.

“She claims to be staying at your hotel.”

“Well, she is. And she’ll be here for as long as she wants.”

They glare at each other, and he can feel Husk bristling up beside him, ready to fight whenever. Valentino looks like he’s about to argue some more, but then sends him a sharp smile instead.

“I will leave for now, but you’ll see me very soon, Angel.”

With a dramatic sweep of his coat, Valentino exits the shop. Angel Dust lets out a sigh of relief, and he turns to look at the small demon.

“Ya good?”

“Thank you.” She says gratefully. “I didn’t mean to cause any trouble.”

Angel Dust pats her head. “Nah. It ain’t your fault. Val just fucking sucks. Honestly, I used to be so scared of him, but I feel like I can handle him better now.”

“Because you’re at the hotel?”

Angel Dust pauses here. “I… I guess so. Funny how that works, huh, Niffty 2?”

“Um, my name is actually-”

“Sorry, sorry. Excuse me.” A voice cuts in. Angel Dust turns around, only to be faced with an unknown person - *woah, he’s handsome* - making his way over to them. “What was that about protection and stuff?”

Angel Dust sizes him up warily, but he doesn’t really seem like a threat. “Ever heard of the Hazbin Hotel?”

“The Hazbin Hotel?” The stranger mulls it over. “I think I heard it on 666 News at one point, but I don’t know much about it.”

“Oh.” Angel Dust glances over at Husk, and then back at him. Normally, he’d flirt with someone so attractive, but he lacks the desire to so at the moment. “Well, you can get all the info on this brochure. We kinda gotta get goin’, so…”

The demon nods, and pockets the pamphlet. “Yeah, no problem. Thanks!”

As the stranger walks away, Husk claps a reassuring hand on Angel Dust’s arm. “Good for you for standing up to him.”

Husk smiles at him, a *real* smile, and Angel Dust uncharacteristically gulps at the sight; he lets out an airy laugh, trying to brush it off.

“Is that so? You gonna give me a gift?” He bats his eyelashes. “I’d accept a kiss for my troubles.”

“Aren’t you trying to be good?” Husk raises an eyebrow. “You shouldn’t be asking for a *reward.”*

“Then are you gonna punish me?” Angel Dust says, his voice lowered, and Husk elbows him to shut him up.

Valentino dials Vox's number, and he taps his foot against the pavement impatiently. *Pick up Vox, I know you're not doing anything you bitch-*

"What do you want." Vox says flatly.

"That fucking Charles or whatever - the princess - she's taking away potential souls that could be working for me!" Valentino says hotly. "I'm going to kill her, and everyone else in that fucking shithole they call a hotel-"

"Val, keep yourself together. You can't just kill the princess of Hell. How would that look for our brand?"

Valentino growls, annoyed but unable to argue against his logic. "Can't I shoot her? Just once?"

"Why don't you join in on my plan instead?" He can practically hear Vox's grin through the phone. *"I have something that'll make you feel better. Meet with me and we'll talk."*

Alastor places the bowtie down onto his desk, and turns back to Lucifer. Admittedly, he hadn't thought very far when he requested to be healed. But that was the effect Lucifer has on him, it seems - the inability to overthink; the desire to just *do.*

Alastor's hand hovers over his shirt buttons, hesitating. He doesn't… he feels a little…

~~shy~~

concerned about showing him his shirtless state.

"What's wrong?" Lucifer asks. It's rather cumbersome how perceptive he can be. He doesn't have a good excuse either, and so Alastor is forced to say the truth.

"I…" He digs his fingers into his palms, and then unfurls them. "…have some apprehension about removing my shirt."

“O - oh.” Lucifer nods quickly. “Then we don’t have to do this. You can make a different request-”

“No.” Alastor interjects. He puts a hand on his sternum, trying to think of how to phrase his muddled thoughts. “I simply meant… hmm. I would feel *much* too exposed by myself.”

Lucifer takes the time to process his words. It’s quite apparent when he comes up with an idea, because his face reddens in hue.

“Okay. I have a suggestion.”

“Oh? Enlighten me, then.”

Lucifer inhales deeply, and then looks at him.

“What if I took my shirt off too? Would that help?”

And all his thoughts come to a stop, his mind back to the sound of a dial-up tone,

krrrrssshhhhhhh.

To think that admitting his reluctance would lead to such an outcome. *Would* it help? Alastor doesn’t even know; he’s in unknown lands at this stage, and all he can do is force his voice into a neutral tone, as though he doesn’t care.*

*But he *does* care. In fact, he’s been rather intrigued by the concept for a while.

“I suppose that is acceptable.”

They look at each other; Alastor finds it harder and harder to breathe; is the very air around them escaping the room, somehow? He smiles harder, trying to maintain some guise of control.

“Why don’t you go first, then?” He manages to say.

“Yeah, sure.”

And Lucifer, he -

with the utmost casualness -

tugs his jacket off,

and then his vest.

Throws them both over a chair, before he starts to unbutton his white shirt. Alastor can’t look away, somehow, watching his dark fingers make quick work of removing his shirt, starting from the first button,

second,

third,

fourth,

fifth…

He catches sight of Lucifer's torso from his opened shirt, just a sliver of pearly white skin. Lucifer slows down here, hands clutching the hem uncertainly.

Did he change his mind?

"So I have, uh…" Lucifer stammers. "Don't freak out, okay?"

"About what?" He asks, but in lieu of responding, Lucifer shrugs off his shirt entirely, exposing the bare expanse of his chest-

-and Alastor immediately averts his gaze, focusing instead on the outline of his abdominal muscles. He always looks so slim, but he's really quite toned.

How does his body… feel?

Curiosity overcomes him, and Alastor places a single finger on Lucifer's torso.

"You are so very pale."

Lucifer's breath hitches at his words, and Alastor slowly drags his hand downwards, trailing over the rigidness of his firm stomach, the dips and lines from his muscles. He traces over Lucifer's abdominal v-line, fingers skating against the sharp corners of his hipbones, going

down-and-down-and-down

until he reaches the waistband of Lucifer's trousers, secured by a button and a zipper.

Interesting, he thinks. *I wonder…*

Alastor's hand hovers over the zipper, before curling his fingers into a fist instead. He's not even sure what he was thinking of doing, his body moving before his brain can even process it.

Something on Lucifer's body shimmers in the light, and it captures his attention instead. He leans in closer to see it, and it's…

"Is this what you were referring to? You appear to have a serpent scale." Alastor runs his finger over it. The scale is delicate and iridescent, so translucent that it's almost invisible.

"Yeah." Lucifer backs away at his touch, looking self-conscious. "Is it… weird?"

Such a strange reaction. Alastor blinks at this, before putting his hand down. "Are you concerned about it?"

Lucifer crosses his arms, as though attempting to hide the scale. “It’s the one thing I can’t seem to shape-shift away. An eternal reminder, I guess. Not trying to be vain, or whatever, but…”

He doesn’t bother finishing his sentence. Alastor wants to see his face - see his expression - but Lucifer lowers his head, hiding what he’s feeling. Still, he can tell from his demeanour that he’s feeling rather unsettled by it.

“That little seraphim did mention that you were ‘perfect in beauty’.”

“The little *who?"*

"The small one." Alastor gestures upwards. "She resides in Heaven."

Clarity finally dawns on Lucifer's face. "Oh - Emily? Right, she did say that. I know she wasn’t trying to insult me, but... there’s no way that’s true. I mean, *maybe* back in Heaven. But down here in Hell, I’ve changed a little, y’know?”

He’s hunched over, now. Like he wants to shrink in on himself. And it’s - it hurts somehow, to see him like this.

Alastor considers what to do here, seized by the desire to comfort Lucifer, to sincerely help him. Something that he doesn’t bother doing with other people, but he wants to do for *him.*

“Lucifer.”

He lifts his head up when he hears his name, and their gazes meet.

“I may have only known you down here, but I must admit that…”

And Alastor feels uncomfortably out of place, delivering words that come straight from his heart. He grapples with how to phrase it, and sighs out,

“You are quite the sight for sore eyes.”

Lucifer’s eyes widen, and he drops his arms to his side. The scale sparkles under the light, but he doesn’t notice, because that’s when Lucifer’s face turns into a solid shade of pink.

“Geez, Alastor.” He sends him a half-smile. “Say more nice things, why don’t you.”

He could. But the frenetic pace of his heartbeat is distracting him, and Alastor switches tactics instead.

“I believe that is enough for today. It would be a problem if your head grows any bigger!” Alastor tousles his blonde hair condescendingly, and Lucifer immediately shoves his hand off.

“Well, *you* have the biggest ego out of everyone I know!”

“I will take that as a commendation. Such high praise from the sin of pride!”

“Only you would think that’s a good thing, idiot.”

But a snort escapes from Lucifer’s mouth, his lips quirked up with mirth. It’s much better when he looks like this: at ease, and amused by Alastor’s quips. He runs a hand through his flaxen locks, trying to tidy it, and he gazes up at him.

“Okay, well, now *I* don’t wanna be the only one without a shirt on.”

Alastor fixes him with a look.

“Impatient, aren’t you.”

How long has it been since he’s removed his clothing in another person’s presence? Decades, perhaps? Alastor starts to take his jacket off; he’s much slower in movement compared with Lucifer, and he can feel his intense stare, heavy and alert.

“Turn around.” Alastor orders.

It’s needless, really. But he can’t handle essentially laying himself bare, one button at a time.

“Er, sure.”

Lucifer dutifully turns away, compliant as always. With slow precision, Alastor takes off his overcoat - his suspenders - his shirt - and when he’s done, he folds them all neatly atop of a desk.

He then looks over at Lucifer, who is still facing away; he can see the six demarcations of where his wings would be, the deep line of his spine down the centre of his back. All the angles of Lucifer are so very tantalizing, and,

like he’s hypnotized,

Alastor steps closer, and closer, and closer…

“I can hear your footsteps.” Lucifer calls out. “You done-”

“Yes.” Alastor murmurs, right by his ear. Lucifer jumps and whirls around, his eyes fixating right onto Alastor’s chest.

“You’re fluffy?” He blurts out, his voice full of marvel. Alastor stiffens up at the remark.

“Such a keen eye, Lucifer.”

“Ohhhhh, fuck.” He mumbles, still staring. His response is rather peculiar, and so Alastor tilts his head.

“What is it?”

“Just when I thought you couldn’t get any hotter.”

Alastor's smile freezes on his face, and Lucifer throws his hand over his own mouth, looking horrified by his words. "Didn't mean to say that, shit, can you just-"

He lifts up a hand, which makes Lucifer cease his blathering. He's always kept his fur concealed, because it's not particularly intimidating. But…

"What *did* you mean to say, then?" Alastor finally asks.

"That I love it-" and then Lucifer slaps his own forehead. "Great, don't listen to me. Can't control my mouth today, obviously."

"Today? Don't you mean always?" Alastor mocks.

Although.

(although, although, although,)

he feels something warm flower from his chest, watching as Lucifer looks increasingly flustered. It's enjoyable, really, to see him all red and embarrassed. Alastor's always delighted in pushing him to the limit.

"Whatever. I think we've done enough compliment exchanges today." Lucifer grouses. But then his expression changes to concern, and he leans in towards Alastor.

"Woah. That's a pretty big scar."

Without a warning, Lucifer places a hand on his chest, warm and gentle. He flinches a little, but when Lucifer tries to pull his hand away -

don't go -

Alastor grabs onto his wrist to prevent him from leaving, and they stand there like that. Staring in silence. Breathing in synchronization.

He can hear Lucifer gulp, and when he speaks, he sounds rather choked. "It's… still manageable. But if I can cover more surface area, it'll heal better."

"Meaning what?"

"So if we have more skin touching each other - by hugging or something - it generally heals faster." Lucifer swallows, hesitation written all over his face. "But a hand on it works, it'll just take way longer-"

Alastor pulls him in without another word.

He wraps his arms around Lucifer's bare shoulders, and in return, Lucifer's hands slowly slide around Alastor's torso. He starts using his powers, bathing them both in a comforting golden light.

It's absolutely freeing;

~~it feels incredible;~~

it tingles wherever they touch, and he can't help but run his fingers down Lucifer's spine.

"Oh-"

Lucifer gasps and arches his back at the contact - presses his body harder against Alastor's - and it makes his brain officially kaput, fizzling out of order. His hand becomes motionless, still placed on the small of Lucifer's back.

"You gonna keep going, or what?" Lucifer mumbles. He keeps his head placed against Alastor's chest, hiding his face.

With some difficulty, Alastor continues his slow movement, fingers sliding

all

the

way

down

until he makes it to Lucifer's waist, and his hands completely encircle his small midriff.

Truthfully, he's unsure how much time passes. When Lucifer had healed him for the first time, it had been a reassuring experience. Pleasant, even, despite his painful wound.

And now that he's healing him for the second time…

he's hit with the uncomfortable realization that he can do this for eternity. To have Lucifer's hands dig into his skin. To be embraced by his slender arms. To listen to the sweet sound of slow jazz. The two of them, alone together.

I feel… content?

Alastor blinks, and he loosens his hold. Lucifer lifts his head up in response; whatever he sees in Alastor's expression makes him drop his arms to the side, and let him go.

"Look! It's gone now!"

Alastor peers at Lucifer's proud smile, before gazing down. His scar is completely gone, and he touches his chest gingerly.

"Ah. So you really did heal me."

"What, did you doubt me or something?"

"Perhaps just a smidge."

Lucifer scowls, although he doesn't actually seem all that offended. "Jerk. Would saying a 'thank you' hurt you too much?"

"Did you want me to praise you?" Alastor taunts. "Then I shall. *Good boy."*

Lucifer splutters incomprehensibly. "You - you always say that to me- asshole-" and then he mutters a string of profanities while reaching for his shirt. After he pulls it on, Lucifer throws Alastor's shirt at him, scowling the whole time. "Here, cover yourself up."

"Such a gentleman." Alastor says sardonically, but he does slip his red shirt over his shoulders. Neither of them bother to button up - shirts open, torsos exposed - and he sits down on the edge of his bed.

Lucifer doesn't move, however. He stands there, his eyes darting between the door and the bed. Like he's considering leaving, which is ~~not what Alastor wants~~

~~not the outcome he'd prefer~~

To be quite frank, the sentimental drivel that he's thinking is making himself sick. Still, he snaps his fingers in order to get Lucifer's attention.

"Are you waiting for my permission?" He lifts an eyebrow, before waving a hand towards the bed. "Then by all means. Sit."

"Oh, fuck you." Lucifer says hotly, although he does walk over, and jumps onto the bed as well. He turns around, and when he does, his open shirt spreads out a little wider - enough so that his serpent scale glistens under the light.

Quite stunning, Alastor thinks.

"You kinda owe me, by the way." Lucifer says suddenly. Alastor squints at him, a bit befuddled.

"And what are you referring to?"

"I mean, I haven't seen you in four days." Lucifer says, raising four fingers up. "So you owe me some kisses. *Four* kisses, actually."

Ah. That is certainly true, isn't it? Alastor hadn't expected him to keep track in this way, but it does make him feel little pinpricks of intrigue.

"Hmm. Very well, then! A deal is a deal."

"Not a deal."

Alastor ignores his complaints, leaning back on his hands instead; the movement causes his shirt to slide off a bit from his shoulders, and Lucifer stares at him rather obviously.

It makes Alastor want to poke fun at him.

“Now, what are you looking at?” He says, and Lucifer snaps out of it. He grabs Alastor’s shirt and hastily pulls it back over his shoulders, fixing it in place. Lucifer even starts to button it up for him, but in his hurry, he skips a few buttons, and now Alastor’s shirt is all askew.

“Did you misalign the buttons on purpose?”

“Don’t change the subject.” Lucifer mumbles. “I gotta collect my debt, here.”

Alastor lets it slide, and doesn’t bother adjusting his shirt. “So be it. Shall we rotate who initiates? I’ll permit you to start.”

Lucifer rolls his eyes; despite this, there’s a fond smile tugging at his lips. “Wow! You’re generous.”

And then he look at Alastor carefully, his eyes scouring him with great attention. He gets off from the bed, stands up in front of him, and it’s one of the rare instances where Lucifer is taller. Alastor has to crane his neck up to look at him.

“Can I pick where to kiss?” Lucifer asks.

Interesting. It hasn’t crossed his mind before, but it doesn’t *have* to be on the lips, now, does it? Alastor nods, and Lucifer bends down.

“I’ll just…”

He kisses the top of Alastor’s head.

It’s quick - a mere peck - and after he sits back on the edge of the bed, Alastor touches the spot where he kissed.

“So that’s one.” Lucifer’s voice is rather small. “Your turn, I guess.”

Alastor hadn’t expected him to kiss there. It’s rather foreign, to be treated like this. Tenderly. Kindly. And what’s even more unusual is that it feels good, precisely because it’s coming from *Lucifer.* Not anyone else.

Alastor observes his face in detail. His large, expressive eyes; his pink-tinted cheeks; his smooth, pale skin. His hair is slicked back as usual, exposing his forehead. The perfect spot.

And so he moves in, pressing a brief kiss right there, on Lucifer’s forehead.

He withdraws right after.

Neither of them speak.

There’s only the sound of jazz in the air, the melody slow and intimate.

And then Lucifer moves without being prompted. Cradles Alastor’s hand within his palms, and brings it to his lips. Just a fleeting kiss on the back of his hand, his lips warm and soft. It's

a princely gesture, and in the back of his head, Alastor recalls that he *is* royalty.

After some hesitation, he lets his hand go.

“One more.” Lucifer says quietly.

“One more.” He echoes.

Alastor lifts up a hand, and gently holds Lucifer’s face.

He can see the way his golden eyes widen, can feel how his breath hitches at the contact. Lucifer doesn’t push him off, his countenance expectant, and so Alastor tilts his chin up…

leans in…

… and kisses him on the lips.

It’s different from the frantic nature of their previous ones, and they kiss as though they have all the time in the world. Alastor keeps his hand on his chin; Lucifer places his hand on the back of Alastor’s head; his slender fingers rake through his red hair pleasantly, like he knows where Alastor likes to be touched,

and -

fuck, Alastor starts to tremble. He can feel his hands shake, can feel his mind spiral out of control, and he’s still not used to it but he wants to be, wants to *so bad, when will this get easier?*

Lucifer pulls away, picking up on his discomfort, and he looks at him anxiously. Not the result that he hoped for, and it’s pretty clear now that Alastor’s worst enemy is himself.

“So that’s four. Guess we’re done now!” Lucifer smiles, but it’s not very convincing. He’s about to get up from the bed when Alastor shakes his head profusely, trying to get him to stop.

“One more.” Alastor mumbles. “To make up for being late.”

And he pulls Lucifer in by his shirt collar.

Rosie hears the sound of a bell, indicating that someone is at the door. She lifts her head up to greet her customer, and it's a welcome surprise when she discovers that it's Charlie, her girlfriend, and Niffty.

"Hello, girls!" Rosie says cheerfully. "What can I do for you today?"

"Rosie!" Charlie smiles at her. "We just had a bit of shopping to do today, and thought we'd drop by to say hi."

"Aren't you sweet! Just the three of you today, then?"

"Yeah. Husk and Angel Dust are taking care of our new guests, and Alastor and my dad are at the hotel."

"Are they now?"

Rosie places her hand on her chin, contemplating. It's been a while since she's met with Alastor, and although being a part of the investigation was rather fun, she's also concerned about how he's holding up.

Is he feeling well? Does he finally understand his emotions, or does he need an extra hand?

"Well! Perfect timing." Rosie holds up an overcoat. "I wanted to give Alastor his jacket back. I'll go visit him."

"That sounds great! We still have some stuff to do, so you can head on over first." Charlie rummages in her pockets, and then hands over a key to Rosie. "You can borrow this!"

"Why, thank you, dearie."

And after she closes up her shop, Rosie sets off towards the Hazbin Hotel, overcoat in hand.

Chapter End Notes

I'm back!! I drew something for Ch. 10, you can check it out here: 1 + 2

Also, I really wanted to write about Lucifer's chest/nipples… so look forward to that in the future LOOOLL

Fun Facts:
- Emily's comment about Lucifer being perfect in beauty (ch. 18)
- Lucifer thinking about how hot Alastor in (ch. 20, 23)
- Alastor owing 4 kisses mirrors how Lucifer owed him 3 compliments in (ch. 7)
- The dial-up tone is from (ch. 10 + ch. 23)
- He's called him a good boy starting from (ch. 4)
- He's actually touched Alastor's chest once before in (ch. 6) and Alastor stared at HIS chest in (ch. 16)
- The items that Alastor collected: rubber ducks (ch. 7/14), red radio (ch. 4, 14, 22), feather (ch. 18)

I hope this story is still interesting enough to read, we've been together for quite a long time now omg (P.S. The real slow burn was Angel Dust and Husk all along). See you next Friday!

The Reveal

Chapter Notes

CH. 31 FANART:
- drawn by: @dirtgrubber
- drawn by: @myntesuniverse
- drawn by: @xxartbunnyxx
- drawn by: @clearpoolart

THANK YOU ILY!!!! Send me anything via Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Alastor kisses him, Lucifer can only think of one thing:

His lips are so soft.

He's always a little shocked by that fact, because Alastor is remarkably prickly, both inside and out. But little things like this - the fluffiness of his hair, the gentleness of his hands - they contrast with him so greatly, it makes him all the more captivating.

Lucifer places his hand onto one of Alastor's thighs, and feels his taut muscle underneath his palm. Alastor's eyes flutter open in response, his hands still clenching Lucifer's shirt.

"I have paid back my debt." Alastor murmurs, breaking the kiss. He doesn't move away, and his red eyes are striking from up-close. "With interest, I might add!"

"Hell *yeah,* you did." Lucifer mumbles back, and Alastor chuckles at this, sounding a little amused. They stay together on the bed; it's nice like this, just the two of them, hanging out. Unlike the past few days, when Alastor had intentionally disappeared.

Which was kind of a sucky experience all around, if he's being honest. He doesn't want that to happen again, and so Lucifer squeezes Alastor's leg, trying to get his attention.

"You kinda pulled a disappearing act on me."

He hadn't meant to sound sulky, but that was the effect he achieved. Alastor glances down at Lucifer's hand before looking back at his face, waiting silently for him to continue.

"I know you left because you were struggling with… something. You don't have to tell me what it is, but I'm here for you, alright?"

“Are you, now?” Alastor says, rather reticently. Lucifer nods, wanting to convey his conviction.

“Yeah, of course. Instead of us leaving each other, we can maybe deal with it… together?”

Alastor’s expression barely changes, but he does let go of Lucifer’s shirt.

“Are you suggesting we team up?”

“I mean, if you wanna put it that way.”

His sentence causes Alastor to lapse into silence, and it makes him feel a little nervous, his mind swirling with nonsensical thoughts. *What should I do now - shit, why did I put my hand on his thigh - should I move it away, or-*

Alastor finally opens his mouth:

“I work alone.”

and Lucifer’s face falls at his response.

It’s not a completely unexpected outcome. Alastor’s secrets are his own, and just because they’re dating (probably an accurate description, right?), it doesn’t mean he has to divulge anything to him.

It’s just

he wants Alastor

to *want* to.

“Right. Right! Yeah, you’ve mentioned this. That is TO-TALLY fine.” Lucifer tries to sound breezy, but it’s hard to keep his voice composed. As he’s sitting there, regretting even asking, Alastor…

…places his hand atop of his.

His hand is so much larger. It covers his own entirely, and Alastor swipes his thumb across the back of Lucifer’s hand, the gesture gossamer-light. Lucifer holds his breath, and Alastor carries on with his gentle action.

(Tender. Unsure.)

Alastor lifts his head up to look at him, and his words come out with a bit of a struggle.

“But if it’s you,”

He continues, voice hushed,

“I suppose I’ll make an exception.”

Rosie unlocks the door to the hotel, and it clicks open silently. She examines the parlour as she enters, trying to find Alastor, but the floor is completely deserted.

Hmm. Rosie thinks. *Is he in his room?*

It feels impolite to shout his name, and so she decides to head upstairs to go look for him. Rosie makes her way over, her heels clicking a little with every step.

Lucifer's proposition is not entirely unsound.

Essentially, he wants them to participate in a partnership, by every definition of the term. It's been a while since anyone asked if he wanted to be part of a duo, be it platonically *or* romantically.

Most sinners in Hell simply took one look at him before running the other way. His reputation precedes him, apparently, and he can hear their voices echo in his head: 'It's the radio demon! Escape while you can!'

Having Lucifer as a confidant? Alastor thinks. *Well, why not?*

They really *have* achieved so much together. And to have Lucifer want to help him, no strings attached… the mere thought does something funny to his heart.

Alastor lets go of his hand to motion towards his own shirt. It's still buttoned up improperly, and little tufts of his fur peek out here and there. To him, it's rather unsightly, but Lucifer seems to find it appealing, strangely enough.

"Now, come fix your mess." Alastor commands.

"You're not even gonna say a 'please'?" Lucifer mutters, but he does it anyway. His hands have only grazed against Alastor's shirt when there's a

knock-knock-knock

at the door, and they both freeze at the intrusive sound. The music on the radio screeches to a halt, and the atmosphere becomes perturbing without the playful melody.

"Alastor! Are you in here?" Rosie's cheerful voice drifts through the door. "I have a little something for you."

"Rosie?" Alastor says, surprised. They both scramble to get decent - slide off the bed - try to find their clothes - but they smack into each other in their haste, and Alastor lets out a hiss at the pain.

"Oh no! Did you bump into something?" Rosie says worriedly.

"I am *perfectly* fine!"

Alastor turns to Lucifer, who is in the midst of buttoning up his white shirt.

Hide, he mouths.

Shouldn't I just go? Lucifer draws a circle in the air, indicating a portal.

I'd prefer if you didn't, Alastor communicates wordlessly.

Lucifer grins at this, and then looks around for a hiding spot. He perks up when he looks at the bed, slipping himself underneath the bed frame, and Alastor snaps his fingers to return his bedsheets to untouched condition.

He looks around, trying to find more incriminating evidence. There's Lucifer's vest, which he slides underneath the bed as well -

"Alastor?" Rosie knocks again. "Is this a bad time?"

"No!"

Alastor hurriedly walks over, not wanting her to get suspicious. His shirt is still in a disheveled state, and so he swiftly pulls on the nearest article of clothing to cover up. He swings the door open, leaning against the frame with practiced poise.

"How lovely of you to drop by, my dear."

Rosie opens her mouth, and then stops. She stares at him, giving him a (very) pointed and (very) long once-over, and it's starting to make him uncomfortable.

"What is it?" Alastor asks tersely, and Rosie's grin slowly widens.

"Quite the fashion statement you're making today."

"Hmm? And what is that supposed to mean?"

Alastor looks down, and he has a sharp intake of breath. He -

He grabbed -

This is *Lucifer's* white overcoat.

(No wonder it felt a little snug.)

Alastor tries to roll with it, coming up with an excuse on the spot. "Ah, yes. I stole his majesty's jacket. Just wanted to teach him a lesson, ha-ha-ha!"

And now Rosie's smile is so big it threatens to split her face in half.

"Maybe you would like this, instead? It'll fit better!" She hands him a garment bag, which has his overcoat inside.

"To think that you made a journey over just for this." He would normally invite Rosie for coffee, but he slowly starts to shut the door instead. "Is that all?"

"One second, Alastor." Rosie rummages in her pocket, and hands him the hotel key. "The princess lent me the key. Could you give it back to her?"

That troublesome Charlie. No wonder Rosie made it into the hotel so stealthily. Alastor plucks it out of her hands, his deer ears flattening on his head. "Of course. Anything else?"

"No, dearie. I'll leave you two to it."

Rosie turns on her heel, and Alastor watches her back recede when he registers what she just said.

"Rosie, no one else is in my room!" Alastor calls out.

"Whatever you say!" She sings back.

She may have the wrong idea. Which is the right idea. Which is…

Alastor shuts the door, his red overcoat still slung over his arms. If he were to be candid, this was a long time coming. Rosie has always been supernaturally adept at matters of the heart.

And -

Somehow, he doesn't feel terrible that she knows. His inexperience had been mortifying for him - but it has been a while since they've started seeing each other, and he's a little more confident about all of *that** now.

(*romantic intimacy.)

Alastor leans against the door, thinking.

Perhaps I should ask for her opinions. She may have better insight on this whole… area.

"D'you think she found out?" Lucifer speaks. He's still under the bed, so his voice sounds rather muffled.

"I believe so. But I will search for her later, and request for her to keep quiet."

"Oh, yeah. Whatever you want."

And once again, he doesn't quite understand his easygoing nature. It occurs to him that Lucifer really doesn't mind either way - if someone knows, or doesn't. He really only seems to care about how Alastor feels about the whole situation.

You are so very peculiar, Lucifer.

He places the garment bag down onto his table, and taps the floor with his radio cane. Lucifer sticks his hand out, indicating that he's listening.

"Will you come out? Or is that your new place of residence?"

"This would be way too much of a downgrade. Just give me a sec, geez." Lucifer crawls out and pats himself down. He pulls on his vest, and there's something else in his hands, but Alastor can't make out what it is yet. "Okay, so-"

He looks at Alastor, and promptly bursts into laughter.

"Oh, god!" He gasps, clutching his sides. "You - are you wearing my *jacket?* It looks like it shrunk in the wash!"

Alastor glares at him. "Well! You *are* half my height."

"I'm not that short, you ass."

"Shall I give you a mirror, so you can check?"

But Lucifer is too busy laughing to respond, and he tries to suppress it by slapping his hand over his mouth. He settles down in the end, still grinning, and then he focuses on Alastor with startling intensity.

"Actually, hold on a sec."

Lucifer waves his hand, and the coat suddenly feels like a perfect fit. Alastor takes a glance at his reflection; the jacket is now completely tailored to his size, the white overcoat emphasizing the lean lines of his body. It's unexpectedly regal, and Alastor can't help but take another look in the mirror.

"Woah." Lucifer sounds a little awed. "It suits you."

Alastor stiffens up, feeling thrown by the compliment. But he schools his face into a neutral expression.

"Does it?"

"Yeah. Just keep it." Lucifer smiles, and it's a sincere one, lacking any sort of ridicule. "I like it on you."

Alastor doesn't respond, immediately.

And then he can feel his face flush. He can't suppress it - can't fight it - he puts his hand over his face, but it's too late at this point.

"You're blushing!" Lucifer sounds much too delighted by the fact.

"I am aware." He snaps back, but it's more out of embarrassment than anger. He keeps the jacket on, though, and Lucifer beams at him.

"Also, I found something under your bed." He waves the item in his hand, cuboid in shape. "I think it's a book or something."

"A book?" Alastor says, uninterested.

At first.

But then he realizes what it is and dread shoots through his body and he jerks his head over and raises his voice and-

"Do not look at it!"

The next part happens seemingly in slow motion, yet Alastor is still powerless to stop Lucifer from reading the title aloud.

"Bold,"

Lucifer's eyes widen,

"Brawny,"

now a snort escapes from his mouth,

"and Booty-"

Alastor lights it on fire.

“Fuck!” He immediately drops the flaming novel onto the ground. It burns until it becomes a crisp, black mess, but by then it’s too late; if Lucifer was laughing before, he’s practically in tears now, howling with glee.

“Oh, fuck!” Lucifer gasps. “I just - you have *porn?* And it - the title-”

“It is not mine!” Alastor feels an unnatural sense of self-consciousness; it makes him feel so wrong-footed that his shadow leaps out from his back, angry and menacing. His shadow beings had collected some nonsensical romance books, and it completely slipped his mind that *this* one was still here.

“It’s under *your* bed!”

Alastor growls, his eyes turning into radio dials, but Lucifer neither cares nor looks scared. The whole situation is escalating wildly, and Alastor needs to get it down under control.

“Get out.”

Alastor shoves him out of the door - “WHAT! Alastor, come on -” throws his hat at him, and slams the door shut. He locks it, and he can hear Lucifer jiggling the doorknob, trying but failing to come back in.

“Don’t be mad. Please?”

Lucifer sounds a little sad, and it’s audible even through the door. It pains him, just a bit, and it makes him push the door open.

Alastor’s still glaring at him, but he grits out:

“I shall see you later.”

Lucifer lights up at this, and Alastor can’t help but feel mollified by his reaction.

“Did you hear about the Hazbin Hotel?”

Charlie’s ears perk up; she’s walking around town by herself, and she swivels her head around to find out who is talking about her hotel. After a moment, she zeroes in on a pair of

demons, and she tiptoes closer to eavesdrop.

“What the fuck is a ‘Hazbin Hotel’?”

“It’s some sort of safe place. You don’t need to be in a contract - they’ll just protect you. I saw them talking about it when I was in a clothing store the other day.”

“Seriously? God, I’ve been so scared. I mean, I know this is Hell and all, but I feel like someone’s about to eat me at every corner.”

Should I approach them? Charlie thinks, and then she shakes her head. *Wait, no! I should be slick about this.*

Charlie takes out a flyer from her jacket, and folds it neatly into an airplane. She lifts it up in the air triumphantly, proud of her handiwork.

Voila! Perfect!

She aims it at them, and throws it with as much precision as she can muster. The paper airplane glides through the air serenely before hitting one of them in the arm, and he picks it up curiously.

“A paper airplane? Huh?” He flattens the page, and his friend leans in to read it as well. “Woah. It’s an ad for the Hazbin Hotel.”

“Seriously? It’s gotta be a sign. You wanna go check it out?”

“Wait a sec…” He squints at the paper. “It says something about making new friends and improving yourself.”

Oh, shit. That part of the Hazbin Hotel has always been hard for demons to wrap their heads around, and she bites her nails worriedly.

“Well, you do need more friends.” He elbows him, and the demon shoves him back.

“Yeah, I definitely need someone better than *you.* Well, couldn’t hurt, I guess. I’m getting kind of hungry, and it does say free food on the paper.”

They walk away, and Charlie pumps her fist in the air gleefully.

Yes! Yeeeeeessss!

Alastor stands in front of **ROSIE'S EMPORIUM** with some apprehension. He's usually quite pleased to see her, but today, he has a rather unsavoury mission to tend to.

Specifically, he's here to keep her quiet.

Rosie spies him through the window, and waves him in. He pushes the door open, and she smiles kindly at him, looking unsurprised by his arrival.

"Ah, Alastor. I knew you'd come by, sooner or later." Rosie gestures towards the backroom. "Can you flip the sign to 'closed' for me? Let's go inside. I'm sure we have a lot to talk about!"

"We certainly do."

Alastor turns the sign over, and locks the door for good measure as well. They make their way to the back of the store, and Rosie sits down on a chair, with Alastor following suit thereafter. He glances down at the table between them: there's already two cups positioned across from each other, with hot tea inside.

"Oh? I see you've prepared refreshments for us."

"Like I said, I knew you'd come by!" Rosie clasps her hands together, and her eyes glint expectantly. "What brings you in, dear?"

Alastor grips onto the handle of the cup, and takes a sip to buy himself some time.

After an excruciatingly long silence,

(One second,

two seconds,

three seconds,

four…)

he touches upon the subject.

"Rosie. I would like to know what you thought you saw at the hotel."

She takes a sip of tea as well, and places the cup down onto the saucer elegantly. "Well, all I saw was a wardrobe malfunction, mister. Why don't you tell me what *you* thought that *I* thought I saw?"

They look at each other, waiting to see who'll admit it first.

"Rosie." Alastor sighs. "I know that you know."

“And what do I know?”

He narrows his eyes at her, and Rosie just smiles back. He’s aware that she could do this all day, that she’s particularly skilled in herding the conversation to whichever way she pleases. And he *did* come here to seek for her advice, anyway.

So Alastor caves in:

“Lucifer and I... we are going steady.”

Rosie lets out the loudest, most joyful shriek in the world, and she pulls him into a tight hug. She doesn’t normally react with such gusto, and Alastor freezes at her embrace.

“Alastor! You have no idea how happy I am for you!” Rosie says, dewy-eyed. “And I really have to give you some credit. I thought you’d be lost in the woods of your mind, forever.”

“How kind of you.” Alastor replies dryly.

“When did this start? Wait, wait, hold on. Let me guess.” She lets him go, and studies him carefully. “Since casino night.”

“Casino night?” Alastor lurches back in surprise. “Heavens, no! It was only a little after Lucifer went missing. Do you recall? I dropped by to ask if you’ve seen him.”

“Oh! So it hasn’t been that long at all. Only a few weeks.”

“Indeed. Which leads me to the reason why I am here.” Alastor leans in, and he lowers his voice furtively. “I require you to keep this between us. We have not informed anyone about our… state of affairs.”

As he had expected, Rosie nods immediately. “Whatever you need, Alastor.”

And then she morphs right into Gossip Mode©. “But I would love some details! C’mon, tell me. Where did you go for your first date?”

“First date?” Alastor echoes, and the sentence feels foreign in his mouth. “We have yet to go on one.”

“You haven’t?” Rosie’s eyes widen, but thankfully, she doesn’t press the topic. “Well, well. You should always take it at your own pace.”

She sits back down now, but she still looks giddy, clearly pleased by the news. “Come to me if you need anything, okay? We can talk about your honey.”

“My *what?”* Alastor recoils at this, and Rosie laughs, looking greatly amused by his reaction.

“Or whatever pet name you gave him. Sweetheart? Sugar? How ’bout dollface? He’s got a cute face, doesn’t he?”

But Alastor is too wrapped up in his own mind to pay attention to Rosie, and she fades into white noise.

Pet names? Dates? None of that had ever crossed his mind, which was remarkably short-sighted of him. All of this was to be expected, was it not? Part of the deal, when it came to courtship?

Alastor runs a pensive hand through his hair, feeling horribly out of place, once again.

Although… Lucifer did mention to come to him if he had any issues.

Very well, then.

“I appreciate your discretion, Rosie.” Alastor says, getting up from his seat. “And I will seek you out if I require assistance.”

“Of course, Alastor!” Rosie hugs him one last time. “I really am so proud of you. Remember when you wanted to kill him?”

“That thought still crosses my mind from time-to-time!”

“Alastor, please.”

True to his word, Alastor doesn’t avoid him, and they take the time to see each other every day. They even exchange chaste pecks, as per their kissing deal - on the cheek, on the hand, on the head - but never on the lips. They only last about a second in duration, and then Alastor slinks into the shadows.

So Lucifer’s new routine looks like this:

1. Run errands for the hotel
2. Argue with Alastor
3. Meet up with him in secret

And today is no different. Lucifer pushes the kitchen door open, and he finds that Alastor is already inside, preparing his coffee. It’s an ungodly hour (five am, to be exact), so no one else is around, and Lucifer sniffs the air curiously.

“Damn. That smells good.”

“But of course. It’s chicory coffee, a New Orleans speciality!” Alastor says cheerfully. Lucifer leans against the counter, observing him as he pours hot water over the coffee grounds. Alastor glances at him from the corner of his eye, and sets the gooseneck kettle down.

“Is this entertaining for you?”

“Watching you work?” Lucifer grins. “Yeah. You barely do anything at the hotel.”

“At least I have a purpose in being here. What’s your job title, again? Professional freeloader?”

“Uh, more like professional *architect.”*

“Ah, yes. You did fix up the hotel after the war. But that was your only contribution, hmm?”

“I fixed up the music room too, douchebag!”

“We fixed it.”

“You complained the whole time!” Lucifer jabs a finger at Alastor’s chest as an emphasis. Instead of responding, Alastor pours his coffee into his cup, the rich scent drifting in the air.

Lucifer looks down at the glass carafe, the coffee so dark he can practically see his own reflection. It looks good - smells even better - and truthfully, he’s kind of tired from getting up so early.

As though sensing his gaze, Alastor pushes it towards him.

“It is far too much for me to finish by myself.”

The implication is pretty obvious here, and Lucifer’s eyes sparkle.

“I’ll grab my cup!”

He teleports to his room, grabs Alastor’s *Oh Deer!* cup from the desk, and comes back in the blink of an eye.

“Fill it up here.” He waves his mug at him, and Alastor lifts an eyebrow.

“I see that you are using my cup.”

“Nope! Like I said, it’s mine now.”

Alastor squints at him, but he does pour the rest of the coffee into Lucifer’s mug. He even adds sugar and hot milk into his cup before handing it to him, and Lucifer accepts it with both hands.

“Is that coffee?”

It's a familiar voice - *Niffty?* - and they both turn towards the door at the sound of her voice. She skitters over with a broom in her hand, and she tugs at Alastor's pant leg.

"I want some too! Alastor, give me!"

Alastor picks her up by the nape of her neck, and brings her to his eye level. "Ah, Niffty. Unfortunately, I'm all out! I only made enough for two."

"So you gave it to Lucifer? Why?" Her eyes flick between him and Lucifer, and Alastor's smile freezes on his face.

"Just…" Alastor swallows, and he's floundering a bit for words; a rare occurrence. "Merely an oversight."

He swipes Lucifer's cup, and hands it to Niffty instead.

"For you, dear."

"Hey!" Lucifer protests, and at the same time, Niffty yells, "YAY!" She grabs the cup, and Alastor places her back onto the floor.

"Now I'll have extra energy to clean." Niffty dashes towards the exit, her voice becoming quieter and quieter as she runs away. "See you later!"

Once she's out of sight, Alastor lets out a sigh. "I did not expect someone *else* to be up at this hour."

"Yeah, me neither. I thought you'd be the only idiot who gets up at five in the morning." Lucifer lets out a yawn, and then rubs his eyes. "Shit, I'm tired. Guess I'll make my own coffee, then."

Alastor glances at him. Thinks for a moment.

And then, he pushes his cup towards Lucifer.

"Take mine." He says quietly.

But he follows up in a more upbeat tone:

"You will see why *this* coffee is vastly superior to other blends!"

Lucifer looks down at the coffee, and then back up at Alastor. He's studiously avoiding eye contact, his red eyes looking straight ahead, and it makes Lucifer break into a smile. It's incredibly roundabout, but Alastor was trying to give him something.

God, he's so damn cute.

Lucifer snaps his fingers to lock the kitchen door. Alastor turns to him after he does this, looking clearly intrigued.

“Come closer.” Lucifer murmurs,

and Alastor takes a step.

“Closer.” he says again,

and Alastor takes another. Their heads are now tilted towards each other; Lucifer looks around, double-checking to see if they’re alone, and then he whispers into Alastor’s ear:

“Can I, uh… kiss your cheek?”

Alastor blinks at the request, but nods by the tiniest margin. Lucifer leans in, aiming for Alastor’s cheek-

But Alastor turns around at the last second, and he ends up kissing him on the lips instead. Lucifer’s so surprised he lurches away immediately, his face flushed, but a thought lingers in the back of his head:

His lips are still soft.

“What was *that* for!” Lucifer practically shouts, unable to reel back his embarrassment. Alastor cackles at his reaction, his hand splayed across his chest.

“Oh? Why are you putting the blame on me, when you are the one who missed?” Alastor arches an eyebrow. He looks rather pleased with himself, and Lucifer scowls at him.

“You know, you are so goddamn cocky.”

“But you prefer that, don’t you?”

Shit. He can’t deny it, and Alastor’s smile grows at this. He leans on his radio cane, and he looks like the very picture of nonchalance when he says something unexpected.

“I assume you are rather free.”

“What, you gonna give me a chore or something?” Lucifer deadpans. Alastor shakes his head, uncharacteristically serious.

“Not a chore, necessarily.” Alastor hesitates, before continuing. “I would like to take you out.”

Lucifer’s brain doesn’t compute the sentence.

“Take me out - like… murder?”

Somehow, even Alastor’s smile conveys his exasperation.

“Your foolishness astounds me, Lucifer.” He sighs, and then glances askance at him. “But I will clarify. Shall we go on a rendezvous?”

And then, it clicks.

“Are you asking me on a *date?”* Lucifer gasps, and jumps in closer. Alastor leans back at this, looking a little stunned by his enthusiasm. “Oh, fuck! Yeah, let’s go! What do you wanna do?”

Lucifer’s always loved romantic gestures, and passionate affection, and intimacy and love in all its shapes and sizes and forms and hell yes he wants to do all of that, all the time, and he leans in expectantly and then-

Alastor pushes Lucifer’s face aside, looking genuinely flummoxed by his question.

“What do *I* wanna do?” He repeats, mulling it over. He keeps his hand on Lucifer’s cheek as he’s thinking, and he brightens when he has an idea.

“Well! I would like to fight you.”

And now Lucifer’s back to being confused.

“Uh, what? So, *is* this a date?

“You. Me. Alone. At your place.” Alastor says slowly. “Need I say more?”

He drops his hand from Lucifer’s face, and they look at each other wordlessly. It’s not the most romantic activity he’s ever heard of, but it’s still a good suggestion; he does enjoy sparring, and Alastor does too.

As first dates go, this would definitely one of the more interesting ones in his life.

“No no no, no - I think I got it now.”

And then Lucifer shoots him a wicked grin. “I’m gonna kick your ass!”

“Ha-ha! What a laughable notion.” Alastor waves him away flippantly. “I will surely be the victor.”

They continue arguing over who would win, and Lucifer takes a sip from his cup. It’s Alastor’s coffee, so the drink is rather bitter, but it tastes good regardless.

Niffty is happily drinking her coffee when she realizes something.

“Woah! It’s so sweet!” She cries out. She stares down at the hot liquid, before her eyes wander down towards the cup. It’s Alastor’s favourite mug - the one that has *Oh Deer!* etched on the side.

However…

“Wasn’t the royal hottie holding this one?” She says, confused. Alastor loves this cup, to the point that he had snapped at her once for trying to use it. (She had tried to borrow it as a vessel for bleach.)

But he let Lucifer use it?

Weird. What does this all mean? Niffty gasps. *Maybe…*

But then she shrugs, not all that interested, and she shoves the thought to the back of her head.

Velvette is cutting fabric when she senses someone approach her. She turns around and is face-to-face with one of her male models, tall and thin in stature.

“Velvette, I’m leaving.”

“Leaving where?”

“I’m leaving this *job.”* He places a leaflet down on her desk. “I’m heading to the Hazbin Hotel.”

Velvette drops her scissors in shock, and it clatters against the counter. “Oh, cut the shit. That’s not funny. My show is tonight, and you’re the main star on that fucking runway!”

“Like I care. I was only working freelance to pass the time.” He says hotly. “But all you ever do is yell at me, and say mean crap to my face!”

“And you think the Hazbin Hotel will just take you in? A pathetic piece of shit like you?” Velvette growls. “What the hell are you even going to do at that beat-up hotel?”

“Whatever it is, it looks a lot more fun than whatever is happening in this fucking tower. They held their own against Valentino - I saw them yesterday!”

He sticks up his middle finger, and walks away.

“I’m not under your contract, so you can’t order me around, bitch. Bye!”

And he really just storms off, going down the elevator. Velvette picks up the brochure, sees **HAZBIN HOTEL** emblazoned at the top, and crushes it into a ball within her hands.

“Are you fucking kidding me?!”

Velvette hurriedly video-calls Vox. He picks up after a few rings, and she doesn’t bother to say a greeting, instead barking out,

“Vox, I want in on whatever you’re planning on with that hotel.”

“Hello, Velvette! I’m good, I’m good, thanks for asking.” Vox says sarcastically. Velvette huffs, and jabs a finger at him.

“Oh, shut up. Just tell me what you and Valentino are up to.”

“Fine, whatever. It’s about time for us to make a move, anyway.”

Chapter End Notes

Fun Facts:
- Alastor’s porn book is from (ch. 21)
- Casino night is from (ch. 15 + 16)
- Alastor making coffee happens in (ch. 3, ch. 9), ch. 3: Alastor drinks it himself, ch. 9: he shares it with Lucifer, and this chapter: he gives him his own coffee cup! Slow transition of trust here
- Also chicory coffee is really tasty (to me)! You can look up the brand Café Du Monde.
- The music room is the conference room they burned down in (ch. 1)
- And Alastor’s deer cup is from the Alastor Altar
- The male model is the same person from the store in (ch. 30)

What do you think will happen on their date? 👀 I have an outrageously stupid idea that I am VERY excited to share! See you next Friday, please leave theories/suggestions in the comments <3

The First Date

Chapter Notes

CH. 32 FANART:
- comic by: @dirtgrubber
- comic by: @myntesuniverse
- drawn by: @twosoulss77
- comic by: @agentofanarchy110
- drawn by: @doggyyasha
- I also wanted to share this OSAS meme!

TY ILY!!! Find me on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Charlie, dear. Did you, uh… recruit more people?"

Lucifer doesn't recognize about half of the people at the hotel now. He even has to step aside so as not to get in the way, watching as unfamiliar demons explore the interior of the hotel.

"Yeah!" Charlie looks positively giddy with excitement. "We've had a couple more sinners join us. Isn't it great?"

"It really is." Lucifer smiles at her, happy on her behalf. She's been working so tirelessly at helping Hell's denizens; it's nice to see her hard work pay off.

"So today, I'm just gonna ease the new arrivals into the hotel. You don't have to do anything! Take the day off. It'll just be me and…"

Lucifer stops paying attention to Charlie's ramblings, because he gets distracted by a conversation behind her. He leans to the side, trying to get a better look, and that's when he sees someone unfamiliar talking with Alastor.

Although, to be more precise, Alastor was pointedly avoiding the demon. So it was more like the stranger was talking *at* Alastor.

"You're the radio demon!" The person gasps. Charlie's still talking, so Lucifer really has to focus to eavesdrop properly.

"And what about it? Everyone has heard of me." Alastor sounds completely apathetic. The sinner leans in closer, which makes Alastor lean away.

"Yeah, but I've only ever seen you on Vox's monitors. See, I used to model at Velvette's studio, and I could always see you in the background." He pauses for a second. "I mean, not

recently. I think Vox stopped spying on you."

"Hmm." Alastor says indifferently. The demon takes another step towards him, and Alastor visibly stiffens up at the proximity.

"You look way better in person." The model says, and -

Lucifer tenses up.

Instantly.

He feels something akin to annoyance burn inside of him, and he clenches his hands so tightly it draws a little blood from his palms, the ichor seeping out from under his nails.

"Dad? You okay?"

Charlie's voice snaps him out of it; she seems worried, and he smiles at her in a (hopefully) encouraging way. "Of course. I just forgot about something, so I have to leave. Now!"

Without waiting for a response, he turns on his heel and makes a beeline towards Alastor, who seems increasingly annoyed by the other person's presence.

"If you wish to keep that skull attached to your neck, you will stop talking to me." He catches wind of Alastor's sentence, his voice sounding dark and mottled. The demon takes another step, blithely unaware of Alastor's escalating rage.

"You're kinda feisty, huh? I like that-"

"OH-HERE-YOU-ARE-ALASTOR." Lucifer shouts. He takes the opportunity to slide in-between them, and he starts to shove Alastor away from the sinner. "Get off your lazy ass and help me out already."

"How needlessly bossy. You can't handle your task by yourself?" Alastor bites back, but he still lets Lucifer push him towards a deserted hallway.

"Aren't you the hotelier or whatever? What good are you if you don't actually *work?"*

"Ha-ha! I suppose I can't leave anything to you, since you are *incredibly* incapable."

"See you later, Alastor!" The sinner intrudes on their conversation, yelling after them, and Lucifer can't help but scowl at his voice. He quickens his movement, and they make it to the corridor in record time.

Once they've turned the corner, Lucifer drops his arms to his side, and Alastor swivels to look at him. His anger seems to have dissipated, replaced by curiosity.

"Did you truly require my assistance?"

"No, I… no." Lucifer admits sheepishly. "I just had a bad feeling about that guy."

“Such a vague statement.” Alastor squints at him, but his posture relaxes, his relief visible in his body language. “Well! You did me a good turn. He was getting on my nerves. If you had come in even one second later, I would have killed him.”

“Maybe I should have waited, then.” Lucifer mutters.

This makes Alastor lift an eyebrow. “Interesting. And why are you so bothered? He wasn’t annoying *you* with conversation.”

Lucifer gapes at him. Does Alastor not know? Or does he *know,* but he wants Lucifer to admit that he’s… he’s…

“Don’t make me say it.” Lucifer groans, putting his hands on his face. He can feel Alastor gazing at him, his stare inquisitive.

“Say what, exactly?”

“That I was…”

“You were?”

Maybe he doesn’t know? He peeks through his fingers, and Alastor looks at him with anticipation, his head tilted to the side.

Cute, Lucifer thinks traitorously. He pulls his hands off of his cheeks, powerless in the face of Alastor’s magnetism, and decides to just confess his stupid, irrational feelings.

“He was flirting with you. And… I didn’t like that.” Lucifer finally concedes. “I was jealous, alright?”

Alastor’s eyes widen, looking shell-shocked.

And then he laughs, the sound so shrill it practically pierces Lucifer’s eardrums.

“Is that so?” Alastor continues to cackle. He puts a hand on his radio cane to steady himself, his laughter coming out in little gasps. “To think you would be jealous of something so ridiculous. Is the king *that* small-minded?”

“I guess I am.” Lucifer grumbles. He can still hear Alastor guffawing, and he aggressively points at him with his apple cane. “Quit laughing at me!”

“Oh, you are quite the jester, Lucifer.” Alastor wipes a tear away, his eyes dancing with mirth. “However, I simply don't *care* about receiving affection from others.”

“I know that! I just… I can’t help the way I feel, okay?!”

“Ah, yes. Such a pitiable Achilles’ heel.”

“Whatever.” Lucifer glowers at him. “You asked ME on a date, so clearly you like what I’m putting down.”

At this, Alastor's laughter finally fades. He glances at Lucifer before looking away uncomfortably, placing a hand on his neck. Just when Lucifer thinks that's the end of *that* topic, Alastor lets out a deep, resigned sigh, softly saying:

"Of course I do. You know that."

Lucifer's breath hitches. It's still a bit foreign to hear Alastor speak like this.

(With sincerity.

With fondness.)

And he likes it - likes it a lot - but his heart is struggling to handle any of it, and he needs to pivot away *right now* before he pushes Alastor onto the floor and throws caution to the wind.

"Speaking of. When are we going out?" Lucifer asks, and he curses his voice for being just the tiny bit shaky. Thankfully, Alastor doesn't comment on it, instead tapping his finger on his chin thoughtfully.

"Shall we meet this afternoon?" He then peers at Lucifer's outfit with Blatant Judgment™. "You will have to wear something else."

"Huh? Why?"

Alastor looks at him like he's the world's biggest idiot.

"Because we are *fighting*. I don't believe your oversized hat is practical for our activity."

"Are you seriously picking on my clothes?" Lucifer feels genuinely offended by his critique. "You have shoulder pads in your jacket!"

"As do you."

"Oh, fuck off. I'll see you at the entrance later." Lucifer gives him the middle finger, which makes Alastor roll his eyes.

"Such class."

He exits through his portal, Alastor melts into his shadow, and they split off here.

Angel Dust catches sight of Lucifer at the entrance to the hotel, and he's wearing something pretty different from his usual attire: a low-cut tank top, tucked into a pair of sweatpants.

"And where are you headin' off to?" He asks. Lucifer looks like he's waiting for someone, and Angel Dust wants to find out who. He's feeling pretty nosy today - which is his default mode, really.

"Oh, hey!" Lucifer pauses, like he's thinking about what to say. "Well, I'm doing something with Alastor."

"You are?" Angel Dust's eyes light up, his interest piqued even further. "What're you two doing?"

"Let's just say I'm gonna mess up his body soooooo bad, he won't be able to walk the next day."

Angel Dust initially gasps, and then narrows his eyes suspiciously.

"I ain't fallin' for that again. Tell me *exactly* what you two are gonna do."

Lucifer blinks at this. "Oh. Well… we're going to go spar."

Angel Dust grabs his shoulders and shakes him around, flinging him with such gusto that Lucifer's head lolls back. "What the *actual fuck!* Ya gotta stop talkin' like that!"

"Like what?"

He lets go, stewing in irritation. Talking to Lucifer always gives him a headache. "Ugh. Just… never mind. So it'll be only you and Alastor, huh?"

"Yeah. Why?"

This gives Angel Dust an idea.

"Wait, don't go yet. One sec."

Lucifer looks confused, but nods anyway, and Angel Dust runs as quickly as he can towards the garden. Once he makes it there, he inspects the flower bed studiously, trying to determine which ones looked the best.

Let's pick these ones! Angel Dust thinks. He grabs a pair of gardening shears and crouches down, cutting a few flowers by the stem. When he's done, he gathers them up into a bouquet, and the red and white petals look rather beautiful together.

"I ain't really into romantic gestures, but damn, I sure am good at it." Angel Dust mumbles to himself. He dashes back to Lucifer, thrusting the flora into his hands.

"Give these to Alastor."

“Wait, what?” Lucifer’s eyes dart between the flowers and Angel Dust’s face, his expression guarded. “Why?”

“Uh…” Angel Dust hesitates. He wants to say, *‘to make things more romantic you idiot,’* but that was definitely not going to fly. “Tell him it’s… because… YOU’RE gonna win the fight. So have some condolence flowers! Sorry for ya loss, loser.”

“Oh!” Lucifer brightens, and he looks pleased at his explanation. “That’s a great idea. Thanks!”

Angel Dust lets out a sigh of relief. At least he bought it.

“He-llo!”

Alastor materializes right between them, smacking Angel Dust in the process. It’s exceedingly painful, and he has to rub his injured shoulder to soothe himself.

“What the hell! That hurt!”

“You only have yourself to blame! You were in my way.” Alastor says dismissively. Angel Dust scowls at him, and in the back of his head, he notes that Alastor’s dressed a little differently - no overcoat, just a red buttoned up shirt, with the sleeves rolled up to expose his forearms.

Alastor turns towards Lucifer, completely ignoring his complaints. “Well! Shall we head off-”

And abruptly stops talking.

Because.

That’s when the two of them lock eyes, and it’s like Angel Dust doesn’t exist anymore.

Neither of them pay any attention to him, choosing to gawk at each other instead, eyes roaming so visibly that he almost feels like he’s interrupting. Angel Dust’s no stranger to tension - he’s a *porn star,* for fuck’s sake - but he suddenly wants to turn around to give them some privacy.

Lucifer swallows, and he grips the flowers in his hands a bit tighter.

“Holy shit. You look…”

But then he glances over at Angel Dust - coughs - and his voice transitions into mockery:

“What the hell are you wearing?”

Alastor’s smile twitches.

“And what are *you* wearing?”

“We’re gonna fight, right?” Lucifer mimes out punching in the air. “You look like you’re heading to a party!”

“This is my most comfortable attire.” Alastor shoots back. “Not all of us can look as slovenly as you. Are you aware that your shirt barely covers anything?”

“Oh yeah? Who the hell wears *heeled loafers* to go sparring?”

Lucifer waves the profusion of flowers in the air, and Alastor’s eyes zone in on them. He leans down, and taps on a leaf with his finger.

“Did you receive flowers from someone?” Alastor asks casually. He’s still smiling, but something about his expression looks a little taut. “A secret admirer, perhaps?”

“Oh. They’re for you.”

And now Alastor looks utterly baffled.

“Did I hear that correctly?” He says slowly. “What exactly are your intentions?”

“Sympathy flowers! Since you’re gonna lose today.” Lucifer sends a conspiratorial grin at Angel Dust, who gives him a supportive thumbs up. He thrusts the bouquet into Alastor’s hands; he accepts them, although he looks at the flowers with some distaste.

“Aren’t you presumptuous.” Alastor says dryly. Angel Dust half-expects him to just chuck them into the trash, but he doesn’t throw the flowers away. Instead, he cradles them carefully in the crook of his arm.

Which is definitely a win, in his opinion.

“We’re gonna go now.” Lucifer addresses this to Angel Dust. “Tell Charlie we’ll be home late?”

“Sure thing, short king.”

Lucifer makes a golden portal. Angel Dust watches as they step through it together, and once it fizzles shut, he lets out a whoop.

“I should really start a matchmakin’ service.”

“You talking to yourself?” Husk’s voice travels across the parlour, and Angel Dust turns to his direction. He sprints to Husk, grinning the whole time.

“Husk! Did ya see that?”

“See what?”

“I handed Lucifer some flowers, and he gave ‘em to Alastor!” Angel Dust says excitedly. “And you were doubting how successful I would be. It’s working, isn’t it?”

“Huh. And what are they doing now?” Husk asks. Angel Dust balks at this, not really wanting to answer.

“They’re… fighting each other.”

“Wow. Ain’t that romantic.”

“Oh, fuck off.” Angel Dust huffs. Husk chuckles, and he points his thumb towards the door.

“Angel. Come on. Let’s get out of the hotel while we can.”

“You askin’ me out?” Angel Dust purrs, and Husk shoots him an exasperated smile, tinged with affection.

“I just figured you’d wanna leave before it gets too busy. There’s way too many people at the hotel now.”

It’s… rather nice of Husk to think about him.

“Alright. But I’m not putting out unless you buy me food first.”

“Good thing we’re not eating, then.”

“Wha- Husk!” Angel Dust shoves him, but they leave the building together anyway.

When they step out of the portal, Alastor checks their surroundings. They’re situated within a grass glade, encircled by tall trees. It’s the clearing beside Lucifer’s mansion, and it’s quite secluded; not another soul in sight.

“We’re good here, right?” Lucifer asks. He’s stretching out his limbs, and his white tank top rises with his every move.

It’s… an incredibly loose garment.

The neckline is so low he can see Lucifer’s collarbones and the beginnings of his chest, his pectoral muscles apparent even from afar. Alastor’s eyes follow the motion of his shirt, and then quickly averts his gaze.

He doesn't usually notice other bodies in this manner. Alastor feels that strange, dissociative sensation again, and he has to turn towards a different direction, anywhere that's *not* where Lucifer is standing.

(He had pointedly avoided looking at his chest when Lucifer was healing him, and he will continue to do so here.)

"This location is suitable." Alastor says coolly, and he carefully sets the flowers on top of a large rock. He doesn't have much of an opinion on flowers in general - but for some perplexing reason, he doesn't want *these* ones to get ruined.

"Alright!" Lucifer calls out. "You ready to get beat up?"

"I highly doubt you can even leave a mark on me." Alastor goads. Lucifer smirks at him, indicating that he's about to launch into trash talk.

"Should we say no powers? Otherwise you'll definitely lose."

Alastor's smile hardens at his provocation. "Well. I *am* curious about your proficiency with hand-to-hand combat."

They stand across from each other, facing each other. It's silent for a moment, the tranquility before chaos, and the breeze makes their hair sway gently in atmosphere.

And then Lucifer strikes first, taking a running sprint towards him. He leaps up into the air - Alastor parries his move - they whirl around each other, throwing fists. Lucifer blocks most of his blows, but every now and then he'll lose focus.

Like right now, when Alastor sweeps his leg and Lucifer tumbles down onto the ground. Alastor stands over him, and leans down tauntingly.

"Are you going to put a little more effort in? Your blows are rather weak today."

His prodding works - Lucifer growls, and he moves a little faster, punches a little stronger. It sends a thrill down Alastor's spine, watching the serious expression on Lucifer's face, the sheer power emanating from his every throw.

"Lucifer," Alastor grits out, catching his fist in his palm, "I need you to go *harder."*

"Oh, *fuck* you." Lucifer snarls. "You can't handle it."

"Try me."

Lucifer's eyes flash red for a second, and Alastor's smile widens at the sight.

They keeping sparring, hit-kick-punch, lightning fast precision and Lucifer is always so, so agile, kicks Alastor right in his abdomen -

Alastor punches his shoulder -

Lucifer pulls his arm back, and Alastor cackles uproariously, already knowing where his move will land.

“Hah!” Alastor sneers. “You are remarkably predictable, Lucifer-”

But then -

Lucifer’s tank top flutters in the wind,

and at Alastor’s angle he has a front-row seat right down Lucifer’s shirt and he sees his chest in all its glory and catches a glimpse of his-

pink nipples?

SLAM!

Lucifer punches Alastor right on his face.

The blow is so strong it knocks him down onto the ground, and Alastor hisses at the painful collision. He lies there, a little stunned, a lot mortified, and he can hear Lucifer frantically running over.

“Oh, shit!” Lucifer yells, crouching down beside him. His hands hover over Alastor’s face worriedly, like he’s not sure if he should touch him. “You okay?! I thought you would dodge that!”

“You have quite the right hook, Lucifer.” He mumbles, still in shock. “Do let me know which gym trainer you are working with.”

Alastor’s not even sure what nonsense he’s speaking, because his mind is a cacophony of disjointed thoughts:

It’s -

I’m -

how could I get immobilized from such a sight?

just

a brief glance at Lucifer’s -

Alastor is so flustered by the whole situation that he can’t think properly. He feels…

utterly, completely, *idiotic*.

Lucifer lets out a sigh, and he pushes Alastor’s bangs off of his forehead. The simple gesture is strangely soothing, and he lies perfectly still, not wanting him to stop.

“If you’re cracking jokes like that, I guess you’re fine, smartass.” Lucifer mutters, but then he leans in closer, his shirt collar dipping even lower (how is that even possible). Alastor

forcibly turns his head away, unable to handle peering at his… *everything*… at the moment.

“Oh, crap!” Lucifer says worriedly. “Never mind, I take it back. Your face is starting to change colour. Does it sting?”

His face does hurt, but not as much as his pride.

“It’s nothing I can’t handle.” Alastor says indifferently. He’s trying to maintain his composure - trying to look unaffected - trying, trying, trying. “Shall we continue?”

“Yeah, but… at least let me heal you first.”

Alastor finally looks at him, about to turn him down, but then he catches sight of the concern overflowing within Lucifer’s eyes. He sighs, and clasps his hands together on his abdomen.

It’s hard to say no to him, and worst of all, he finds that he looks forward to it.

~~To have Lucifer fuss over him.~~

“If that is what you wish.” Alastor concedes. He waits for Lucifer to place his palm on him, familiar now with the healing process.

But Lucifer leans down, and kisses him on the cheek instead.

He snaps his head towards him; he can feel his face already recovering, the pain receding.

“I never mentioned, but, uh. I can heal with every part of me.” Lucifer says sheepishly. “I used to kiss Charlie’s injuries to heal her. She’d run up to me and say, ‘daddy, kiss my boo-boos!’ That was hundreds of years ago, though. So a kiss works. Hope that’s okay.”

Alastor puts a hand on his cheek, right where Lucifer had kissed him. Truthfully, it’s more than okay. He’s finally gotten accustomed to their current level of intimacy, and it’s a rather pleasant experience, both physically and emotionally.

But Alastor just says,

“I see.”

Lucifer busies himself with inspecting the rest of him, checking for other bruises. His hands trail over Alastor’s forearms before clasping onto his exposed wrist, skin against skin, and he’s tantalizing in his gentleness.

“Does it hurt anywhere else?” Lucifer asks. He still looks distraught, and Alastor wants to alleviate that somehow.

“I have one other place that is in pain.”

“Oh. Where?”

Alastor points to his own face. “You seem to have injured my mouth. I require healing there.”

Lucifer’s eyes widen, cheeks flushing, but he starts to laugh affectionately. “You - okay. And you call *me* the jester.”

“I do love entertainment!”

Lucifer leans down anyway, coming in closer, slowly, inch by inch,

and Alastor impatiently grabs Lucifer’s tank top - pulls him down right on top of his chest. He situates Lucifer in-between his legs, and they kiss searingly, eagerly, a bruising touch.

Alastor sighs into his warmth; feels the softness of his lips. His scent is divine, mixed with the contrasting notes of hellfire, of flowers, of breezes and sunny days. Quite an addictive combination.

“D’you feel better?” Lucifer murmurs, breath ghosting over his lips. Lucifer has one hand on his thigh, the other placed behind Alastor’s head, and his nails dig in pleasantly.

“I am still unwell.” Alastor replies, and impatiently tugs at his shirt strap. “You will have to keep healing me.”

“Liar.”

Lucifer doesn’t seem to mind, though, and he goes back for more.

In a rare form of unity, the Vees huddle in the monitor room together. Vox is pretty much done planning everything, but he just needs to do one final check.

“I haven’t seen you look at your Alastor monitors in a while.” Valentino comments. “Should we surveil him before the party?”

“Oh, yeah.” Vox clicks through the screens. “I stopped after that fucker dropped by, back when he was searching for Lucifer. But I’ll see what he’s up to now.”

“You actually stopped looking at him? Who even are you?” Velvette sneers.

“If you’re going to be be a part of *my* plan, Velvette, you’ll need to have a better attitude.”

She rolls her eyes, but they all check the displays, searching for Alastor's figure.

"Time out!" Lucifer tries to catch his breath, but Alastor takes the opportunity to shove him onto the ground. His hand is so large he pins both of Lucifer's wrists in one palm, and Lucifer looks at him with irritation. "What did I just say."

"Are you admitting defeat?" Alastor says mischievously.

"In your dreams."

And then Lucifer slams his head against his head - Alastor growls and jerks back at the contact - and then he flips *Alastor* down onto the ground instead. He leans in, smiling wickedly the whole time.

"Hah! You gonna listen to me now or what?"

"Oh? Did I have an alternative?" Alastor gestures towards their position. "You can be quite the tyrant, *my king."*

Lucifer jerks away at the name, and Alastor takes the opportunity to punch him one last time. It fucking hurts - not that he would have it any other way - Lucifer rolls off of him, and he can hear Alastor snickering beside him.

"Why, you little-"

"You are the little one here."

They glare at each other, lying down side-by-side, but it's nothing malicious. Lucifer breaks their eye contact, and he stares upwards towards the sky; the sun is starting to set, and it makes everything look like it's been lit aflame. A never-ending stretch of orange and crimson.

"C'mon. It's getting dark." Lucifer says. "Let's go home."

"I suppose we are done for the day." Alastor gets up first. After he pats himself down, he looks downwards at him. "Let's pick up the pace, shall we?"

“Yeah, yeah. Coming.”

As he walks away, Lucifer props himself up, staring at his back. He had been caught off-guard when he first saw Alastor; his outfit was so streamlined, so elegant. And the way his sleeves were rolled up, revealing his forearms…

Lucifer runs his hands through his hair, wanting to tear it out. *Am I okay? They’re just arms! Get A Fucking Hold Of Yourself Lucifer, God.*

While Lucifer’s internally scolding himself, Alastor gingerly picks up the flower bouquet. He handles it quite carefully, like he’s not sure what to do with them, and Lucifer watches him interestedly.

It had been kind of odd that Angel Dust had suggested the bouquet, but hey. Flowers on a first date? A classic move.

Although, he doesn’t know how much Alastor actually likes the plants. He doesn’t really seem to be a flower person, as he’s never really expressed an interest in them.

But what he *does* enjoy is…

“Come back here.” Lucifer waves him over. Alastor narrows his eyes at him, looking rather peeved.

“Am I supposed to be at your constant beck and call?”

“I just want to give you something! Hurry up!”

He lets out a harrumph, but he does trot back towards him. Alastor crouches down to meet his eye level, and Lucifer snaps his fingers, conjuring up a book of music sheets.

“Here.”

Alastor gazes down at the pages, looking rather intrigued. “A music composition, I presume?”

“Yeah. I wrote a piano accompaniment.” Lucifer hands it over to him. “It’s supposed to go along with the violin piece I made for you. That’s why I, uh, spent so long in the music room.”

And then he hurriedly adds, “I’m not that great at piano, so don’t make fun. Alright?”

Alastor doesn’t speak for a moment. He stares at Lucifer, resembling a deer in headlights, and he grips the pages tighter.

“You are gifting me something again.”

Lucifer blinks at this.

“Well… yeah, I mean. It’s more of a part two of the original gift, I guess. Honestly, I was supposed to have this finished earlier, but it’s harder than it looks.” And then Lucifer gazes at him anxiously. “Why?”

“I have yet to…”

Alastor trails off, and he shakes his head. A clear signal that he’s done with the topic. Instead, he opens up the book, and his eyes scour over the composition, like he’s trying to play it in his head.

“Hmm. It lacks polish.”

“What did I *just say* about not making fun-”

“But it has heart.” Alastor finishes, looking up at him. “Splendid work, Lucifer.”

And okay, Alastor has no right to be this earnest. This straightforward. Lucifer looks away, trying to fight the blush that’s threatening to rise on his cheeks. It’s nice that Alastor likes it at least, based on the shine in his eyes, the genuine gratitude in his voice.

Lucifer wants to say that - that he’s so damn happy about Alastor’s compliment - that he wants to hear more nice words come from his mouth - that he likes Alastor *so, so much* - but all he can manage is,

“T… thanks.”

Alastor closes the music book for now, and he studies the blank cover. "And what is the title of this piece?”

“Oh.” Lucifer scratches his head. “I actually left it untitled. I’m not that good with names.”

“Evidently.” Alastor says dryly. “Are you aware that you still call Charlie’s sweetheart by the wrong name?”

Lucifer gapes at this. “Wha - and you didn’t correct me?!”

“No one else seemed to want to point it out.”

“Then what *is* her name?”

“She goes by Vaggie.”

“Vaggie! Okay, Vaggie…” Lucifer mutters, trying to commit it to memory. “Vaggie, Vaggie, Vaggie, Vaggie…”

And then Alastor puts a finger on Lucifer’s lips, silencing him.

“I do not wish to hear someone *else’s* name coming from your mouth.” He says tersely. Lucifer snorts at his reaction, because… well, what else can he do, really?

“Okay, *Alastor.”*

And Alastor smiles, looking so pleased that Lucifer almost leans over to kiss him again.

Almost.

“Found him!” Velvette points to the furthest monitor, located at the top. The screen shows Alastor and Lucifer, sitting in some sort of grassy field, and she has to squint to see it properly. “They’re… what are they doing? Is that Alastor, holding flowers?”

“It appears so. Are they on a little date?” Valentino laughs, and turns towards Vox. “Looks like they’re together now! Doesn’t this just kill you, Vox?”

Vox looks at the screen hatefully. He’s loathe to admit it, but yeah, it fucking does, because Alastor should be miserable for all eternity. And to think that he would find *happiness?* Utterly unacceptable.

Which… gives him an idea.

“Actually, we can use this.” Vox says, feeling a wave of serenity wash over him. He turns the monitors off at this point, and swivels his chair to face the other Vees. “I’ll call the princess now.”

Chapter End Notes

By the way!! This is not intended to be radiostatic in any way, I just model their dynamic based off of the show.

If you're interested in what they're wearing this chapter, I drew something here: 1 + 2

Fun Facts:
- Lucifer speaking "don't make me say it" parallels Alastor speaking "do not make me say it" in (ch. 27)
- Alastor materializing in-between Angel Dust and Lucifer mirrors how he came between Vaggie and Lucifer in (ch. 27)
- Lucifer has been calling Vaggie "Maggie" since (ch. 1) LMAO

So that concludes Act 5: Hotel Promotion (Side B) / Kissing. That was Ch. 26 - Ch. 32. Moving into Act 6! Can you guess what happens? I will be turning up the Heat next chapter, see you on Friday <3 as always pls leave suggestions/theories in the comments!

The Lesson

Chapter Notes

CH. 33 FANART:
- comic by @dirtgrubber: 1 + 2
- drawn by: @19Gioia93
- drawn by: @myntesuniverse

THANK YOU for the beautiful art! Find me on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Charlie's walking through the parlour when the television powers up on its own. She halts in her tracks, watching curiously as the screen flickers.

"Is this thing broken?" She slaps the television a few times, trying to get it to stop glitching. Eventually, a familiar blue face pops up onscreen - someone she hasn't seen in a while.

"Oh wait! Vox?"

"Princess." He responds politely. "How are you doing today?"

"I'm great!" She waves at him, and then her enthusiasm fades into wariness. "But, um… I guess you're calling for a reason?"

"You're correct. I know your time is valuable, so I'll cut to the chase."

Huh. Is he being glib? Charlie thinks. Vox grins at her, and it's a hollow rendition of a smile.

"I'm planning a product launch party, and I'd like to use your hotel as the venue. Did Alastor mention it to you?"

"He did." She looks at him sternly. "But you messed with my dad and Alastor last time, so I'm sorry, Vox. I don't think it's a good idea to have you here."

"Really? And here I thought your hotel is all about second chances." To stress his point, he waves a pamphlet in his hand, where the cover literally says **HAZBIN HOTEL: WE ARE ALL ABOUT SECOND CHANCES!**

Oh god. Charlie inwardly groans. *Why did I write that?*

"Um… well, you're right." She can't exactly go back on her word, now, can she? (Maybe Vox has reformed, in one way or another.) Regardless, she needs to do the responsible thing

here: figure out how to safeguard her staff.

“Okay, Vox! We’ll host your party.” And then she crosses her arms, trying to look more intimidating. “On a couple of conditions.”

“I’m all ears.”

“Take down your cameras around our hotel. Actually, not just our hotel - anywhere else that’s related to my family. So that includes my dad’s house, Lu Lu World, and the Heaven Embassy.”

Vox gapes at this, finally dropping his friendly facade. “Are you fucking serious?”

“Deadly serious.” She insists. “And everyone has to leave their phones at the door. Absolutely no filming - and no camera crew this time! If I see even a single photograph, I won’t go easy on you.”

Vox sighs at this, sounding rather miffed. “You drive a hard bargain, princess. There’s no other way around it?”

“Why? Were you plotting something?”

They stare at each other, silently facing off. After a while, Vox gives her a casual shrug.

“Relax! All I’m planning is to host a fun party. But if those are your rules, I guess I’ll have to accept. I’ll contact you later with the party logistics.”

“Sure thing.” Charlie nods. “I’ll keep an eye out for the TV.”

“Looking forward to working with you, princess.”

“Me too!”

But neither of them mean it.

Alastor finished memorizing the piano accompaniment.

It wasn't a particularly difficult task. He had practiced it for a few days, playing in the jazz club that Lucifer made for him, and now the song is permanently ingrained in his head.

Since he's done with it, he places the music book onto his bookshelf, situating it next to the rest of Lucifer's items:

A) the rubber ducks
B) the red radio
C) Lucifer's white jacket
D) his bicoloured feather

Alastor's deer ears flatten at the sight. *This little collection is getting a tad… outrageous.*

He turns away from the bookcase and sits in his chair instead, his mind swirling with a singular thought. Which is…

he feels discomfited by his growing fascination with Lucifer.

Alastor tilts his head back, looking up at the ceiling with some hatred. He's suffering, once again. His head hurts; his body aches; he's cornered by yearnings that are all-encompassing, and he's powerless in the face of them.

It may be much easier in the moment when he caves in to his desires, but the aftermath is far too confusing - especially when he's alone, and lost in deep introspection.

"Hmm. What to do…" Alastor mumbles, still gazing upwards. He reflects on their romantic tryst, ~~Lucifer's bare chest pink nipples~~ - *don't think about that* -

Kissing, then.

He thinks about kissing Lucifer.

It's not an activity he usually finds himself enjoying. In fact, he was quite indifferent about the subject when he was alive. But something about Lucifer is oddly mesmerizing, and every time they *do* kiss, he wants more, needs more, takes more.

Is it due to his angelic disposition? Alastor pushes his bangs back, and grips it tightly in his hand. *Even so, I did not feel this pull when we first met.*

They've known each other for so long at this point. He can admit, at least to himself, that Lucifer's presence has become increasingly essential. He's deliciously tempting; extremely stimulating.

And rather delectable, based on the few times Alastor has managed to taste him. But Lucifer *would* be tasty, wouldn't he? Being a divine being, and all that? Perhaps not his blood, but other places…

Without permission, his mind suddenly conjures up images of Lucifer licking ice cream, his forked tongue flitting out from his pink lips; at poker night, where he placed the cherry stem in his mouth, and tied it in seconds.

I do wonder how his tongue tastes. Alastor thinks absentmindedly.

And his mind screeches to a halt.

“What purpose does this serve?” He drags his hand down onto his neck, feeling rather daft, once again. The sheer amount of gibberish that crosses his head due to Lucifer is absolutely astounding.

But it’s hypnotizing, now, and it’s the only thing in his mind, just mere wisps of an idea floating, whispering, echoing.

Very well, then.

He’ll entertain this notion for one second. The most possible scenario, in which he can *actually* taste Lucifer’s tongue, would mean…

Never mind.

He’s not going to bother with that. He won’t bother with it. He can’t-

give in,

give in,

give in…

“ Alastor.”

Alastor’s deer ears perk up, and he listens intently. Someone had called his name.

(Not just someone, but Lucifer.)

And so he teleports away using his shadow.

Lucifer had spoken Alastor's name out of curiosity, not really expecting him to appear. So it's a rather pleasant surprise when he materializes in the centre of the music room, suave as always.

"You called?" Alastor leans against his radio cane, and Lucifer pumps his fist into the air.

"It worked! I didn't think you'd actually hear me."

"Hmm. So you didn't require anything?" He squints, looking put out. "You really shouldn't abuse this communication system."

"Oh, what? Did I distract you from your VERY BUSY schedule? You were probably just eating or something, right?"

Alastor stiffens up initially, and then laughs with practiced composure. "And what were *you* doing? It looks like an awful mess in here!"

"I was playing music!" Lucifer says indignantly. He looks around, and - okay, so the room is a little chaotic, but he was preoccupied, okay? "Oh, shit. I'll clean this up later."

"Never you mind. Niffty would be happy to tidy up." Alastor comes in closer, and gazes at the sheets on the music stand. "What song were you practicing?"

"Just some ol' classics. Remember this one?" He taps the page. "We performed it at Mimzy's Club."

"Ah, yes. If I recall correctly, you were off-cadence."

"You kept playing the wrong keys!"

They glower at each other, and then Lucifer waves him away with his violin bow. "Well, whatever. I didn't actually need you here for anything, so you can leave if you want."

He doesn't want to force Alastor to remain; he had summoned him simply because…

Well, he missed him.

And it's enough for him to catch a glimpse of his smiling face, to hear his caustic words, and he sort of expects Alastor to fire a retort before slipping away.

(But…

he's always been unpredictable, hasn't he?)

Alastor leans against the scarlet grand piano, his hands gripping the piano lid. In the back of his mind, Lucifer notes that the colour of the instrument matches him almost perfectly.

"And if I want to stay?" Alastor says quietly. Lucifer tightens his grip on the neck of his violin, heart pounding when he says:

"Then stay."

They watch each other carefully, vermillion eyes into gold. Both of them trying to guess the other person's next move.

Alastor averts his gaze first, and slides his fingers delicately across the red piano lid. Lifts it up, before positioning the lid on top of the prop stick.

"I *am* already here." Alastor finally says. "Perhaps we ought to perform your piece."

"Oh!" Lucifer lights up at this. "You practiced it?"

"Was I not supposed to?"

"No, it's just - it's only been a few days, right? You're fine with performing already?"

"Well! I am an excellent pianist." Alastor lifts an eyebrow. "I suppose my musical aptitude does exceed yours."

Lucifer scowls at his response. "You're so full of shit. I know how to play more instruments."

"Perhaps. But I am much more skilled at the few that I know!"

They glare at each other; without exchanging another word, Alastor pushes the keyboard cover, Lucifer places his violin onto his collarbone, and they commence playing.

It's a duet, with a hint of competition laced within. Even so, the two instruments synchronize perfectly, and the song sounds much richer with the addition of the piano. Alastor really knows how to imbue his every note with passion; with atmosphere.

The kind of sound only a seasoned pianist could produce, because it's played by someone who truly loves the instrument.

Lucifer peeks over at him when he's performing, only to find that Alastor is already observing his profile, his eyes piercingly clear. It makes him hesitate for a second, almost missing a note, but he quickly looks away to focus on playing. He can't have Alastor one-up him, anyway.

But it's fun to perform together. Always have, always will. Their dulcet notes blend together in exquisite harmony, and when they're done, Lucifer can't help but be impressed.

“Alright, fine. You’re good.” He grumbles. “You memorized that so quickly. How’d you do that?”

“Well! I’ve always had a knack for memorization.” Alastor taps a finger to his head. “If you recall, I don’t forget a single thing that someone tells me.”

“That extends to this kind of stuff too?”

“Indeed.” After a moment, he looks at Lucifer. “I suppose I shall return the praise. Your music composition was, admittedly, a treat to learn.”

Lucifer grins at this, pleased, and Alastor’s gaze flits towards his mouth.

Lingers there.

And…

He.

Doesn’t.

Look.

Away.

Lucifer feels a little self-conscious by the stare - *do I have something on my face?* - and he waves his violin away, making it disappear. Alastor’s eyes are still focused on him, however. He’s quiet again, and Lucifer feels the uncontrollable urge to fill the silence with words.

“Okay! Uh…” He begins awkwardly. “Good stuff, good stuff. Since we’re done, you wanna go fight again?”

“Not particularly.” Alastor responds, a little tense. Lucifer raises an eyebrow; it’s pretty unusual for him turn down a skirmish.

“Really? Should we go help out the hotel, then?”

“Oh, I would much rather do something else.”

He snaps his fingers, and the door locks itself. Lucifer turns his head to look between the entrance and Alastor, feeling increasingly confused.

“Hey, what are you-”

“I have a concern.” Alastor cuts in. His face is carefully blank, devoid of any emotion. “You mentioned prior that I should come to you if I do.”

“Wait.” Lucifer’s jaw drops. “You want to… confide in me?”

“That is one way to put it.”

It's happening! He thinks gleefully. *He's coming to me with his problems! YES!*

At least this way, Alastor won't just vanish again when the going gets tough. Lucifer hurries over to stand in front of him, and he waits expectantly.

"What is it? You know, I'm a great shoulder to cry on!"

"I will pass on that offer." Alastor says wryly. He doesn't speak immediately, as though he were weighing his options, deciding which words to say.

He first closes the piano fallboard.

Gets up, and then shuts the lid of the piano, making the surface perfectly flat.

He swivels to look at Lucifer; he has a casual smile on his face, but his deer ears are pressed down on his head, betraying his anxiety.

"I have a certain…" Alastor pauses, thinking. "Let's call it a craving, shall we?"

"A craving?" Lucifer furrows his eyebrows. "You want a specific food?"

"Somewhat." Alastor lets out a deep sigh. He speaks the next part of his sentence carefully, like every word pains him to say.

"I can't stop thinking about the taste of your body."

Lucifer's brain goes out of order for a second.

And then, he kickstarts it back into action. Oh, right - Alastor had licked his neck once, right? Lucifer also gave him some blood in Heaven, which he had despised (jerk). Still, he *is* a bit of a cannibal. If that's the case, then Alastor must be insinuating…

"I'm not cutting off a finger so you can eat it." Lucifer warns, and Alastor immediately waves the suggestion away.

"No need for that. What I yearn for is to…" He runs his hand through his red hair, fidgeting uneasily, and then he drops his arm to his side. "I would like to taste your tongue."

"I'm not cutting off my tongue, either."

Alastor groans, clearly irked. *"Lu-ci-ferrrrrrrrrrr*... I am saying - I -"

And it's pretty rare to see this, because Alastor struggles to create a sentence, his words choppy and uncomfortable. He pauses here, skims his fingers across the piano fallboard, and the two of them fall back into silence.

Lucifer's patience is never-ending, though, and he waits for him as he comes up for air. It takes a while (as all good things do), but eventually Alastor lifts his head up, the faintest beginnings of a blush spreading across his cheeks.

“I am speaking of kissing.” He finally admits. “Is that clear enough?”

Kissing -

and tongues? -

so -

All the puzzle pieces finally slot into Lucifer’s head.

“Oh.” He wheezes for a second, and then pounds his own chest to catch his breath. “Ok, yes. Hell yes- I mean.” He coughs for a second, trying not to sound so overeager, *fuck, why can’t you play it cool for once?*

“Is that your concern?” He manages to say. “You weren’t sure if I’d say yes?”

“Incorrect, as per usual. I *know* you’ll say yes.” Alastor says dismissively, and Lucifer rolls his eyes at this. “No. My concern is that…”

Alastor takes a step closer towards him, and he seems calmer now. Less anxious. “It has been quite some time since I have engaged in such practices.”

Another step.

“Therefore…”

Alastor rests his hand on Lucifer’s chin, and gently tilts his face upwards. He leans in, so close that his red hair practically brushes against Lucifer’s cheekbone.

“Teach me what you like.” He says, voice lowered. “Show me how you want it.”

And even though Alastor’s giving him the reins, his words come out more like an order, and Lucifer feels that swirl of intrigue sizzle underneath his skin, simmering right below the surface.

“Well.” Lucifer breathes out. “Since you asked so nicely.”

And once he agrees, Alastor comes nearer, bends down some more like he’s trying to reach him, which… it can’t be that comfortable, right? Their height difference is a little inconvenient for this activity, and so Lucifer lifts up a hand to stop him.

“We should probably be the same height, for starters. Maybe if there’s a stool I can step on or something-”

“Allow me.”

In one smooth motion, he grabs Lucifer by the waist and picks him up. He feels weightless, practically airborne - and then Alastor gently places him atop of the piano’s closed lid.

“Problem solved.” He says coolly, but there’s a clenching in his jaw, an intense focus in his eyes. His hands are still wrapped around Lucifer’s waist, his palms practically burning through his clothes and into his skin.

“You’re a fast thinker.” Lucifer mumbles. He places his hand along Alastor’s jaw, but he can feel him tremble, just the slightest bit. Under his bravado, Alastor really is…

so damn adorable, Lucifer thinks. He brings his arm up and weaves his fingers through his red hair instead, which makes Alastor ease up by an infinitesimal amount.

“We’ll start slow.” Lucifer promises. Alastor’s eyes dart back and forth, but he nods minutely.

Lucifer leans in,

Alastor follows suit,

and they press their lips together chastely. An experimental touch. They’ve done this enough times to be comfortable with the motions, and Alastor tilts into him, his body relaxing. It always feels so good when they kiss, in a myriad of ways (physically, emotionally, mentally), and it takes a lot of restraint for him to pull away.

Lucifer murmurs, his voice rough:

“Open your mouth for me.”

And Alastor looks a little startled, but he complies anyway, unusually obedient. This time, only Lucifer leans in. He runs his tongue hesitantly along Alastor’s lip, just as a little warning, and Alastor parts his mouth further, and that’s when it all keeps going

and going

and going

Lucifer pulling him in closer, fisting his hands into his hair, Alastor tightening his grip on his waist -

oh, god, Alastor’s tongue against his is just -

Why aren’t we doing this all the time? Lucifer thinks dazedly. *All those days we wasted not making out. I’m so stupid.*

Alastor lets out a small gasp, so tiny and cute it makes Lucifer open his eyes a little, trying to view his expression. He can’t see anything at this proximity, so he draws back -

and Alastor chases after him to capture his lips, pressing back onto his. Alastor is the one who deepens the kiss this time, frantic and needy and absolutely perfect in its imperfection; it makes Lucifer’s breath hitch, causes his head to spin and he needs to breathe but also *fuck all that,* all he cares about is getting closer to Alastor right now.

And so his hand grips tighter onto his red hair, the action pulling out the slightest whimper from Alastor and-

that's when his crimson eyes flutter open, his pupils blown. Heated.

Hungry.

Alastor shoves him down completely on the piano lid, and he clambers on top with superhuman speed. He's so big he completely blocks out the light from the ceiling, and all Lucifer can see are his red eyes, piercing in the darkness.

"The inside of your mouth…" Alastor runs his thumb over Lucifer's bottom lip, "the way your skin tastes…" drags his fingers down Lucifer's neck, "every part of you is so very appetizing, *Lucifer."*

He looks wild, resembling a crazed animal, and Lucifer doesn't even recognize him now. Alastor engulfs the room in a bright green light, shadow jumping out from his back, claws digging into Lucifer's shoulders painfully, but he finds that he doesn't mind the pain, not one bit.

He's absolutely mesmerizing like this and Lucifer can't take his eyes off of him and Alastor advances closer and closer and-

stops.

He loosens his grip on Lucifer's shoulders, and there's a flicker of mortification that passes his face. Like he's coming to again.

"I believe this is enough for today." Alastor finally says. and then…

he slowly retracts his arms.

climbs off of Lucifer.

rests his hand on his forehead.

it's over as fast as it started. going from a hundred to zero in a flash.

Lucifer's heart is still racing, but he sits up and combs down his hair just to do something, anything, trying to occupy this eerie, awkward space between the two of them. The tension is palpable, its presence uncomfortably oppressive.

Thankfully, Alastor doesn't leave.

He sort of just stands in front of him silently, his smile twitching at the corners. All signs point to discomfort, and Lucifer wants to reassure him, say that it's okay.

Think, think, think. What can I do to get rid of this weirdness?

“Well, in other news.” Lucifer says, trying to keep his tone light. His voice catches Alastor’s attention, and his eyes snap towards him.

“Hmm?”

“Since you asked me to *teach* you… well, that kiss was definitely an A+. You got nothing to worry about, there.”

He conjures up a gold star sticker, and smacks it onto Alastor’s cheek. “For you.”

Alastor stares at him, momentarily speechless. He lifts his hand to his face and gingerly peels the sticker off, looking at it in his palm.

And -

He laughs. Out loud. Cackles, really, the sound equal parts abrasive and infectious.

“HA!” Alastor guffaws, and he places a hand over his mouth, looking deeply amused. “A *sticker?* What am I supposed to do with this?”

He looks infinitely better now, almost back to normal, and Lucifer’s grin widens at this.

“Why don’t you put it on that Lucifer Ledge of yours.”

“Not a ledge-” Alastor stops, and narrows his eyes. “It appears that your awful linguistic habits have rubbed off on me.”

Lucifer snorts at this. “Uh, it’s not awful, you idiot.”

“It certainly is. You really ought to practice your speech etiquette.”

“Jackass.”

“Imbecile.”

They fire insults for the rest of their time together, but Alastor keeps the sticker in his hand, and Lucifer catches him looking at it every now and then.

After some time, they exit into the hallway together. The hotel's strangely silent for once; perhaps Charlie and her merry crew have vacated the premises. As they're walking down the corridor, Alastor takes the opportunity to glance at Lucifer.

He really is quite tasty. Alastor thinks regretfully. *How troublesome.*

It would have been far easier if he had tasted terrible on the inside, but that unfortunately wasn't the case. He already misses the sensation, wants to put his mouth on Lucifer's again, and Alastor digs his nails into his palms to distract from the enticement.

Besides, he'd rather tackle a different issue.

Namely, Lucifer's Very Understanding Nature.

Over and over and over again, Lucifer bends over backwards to accommodate Alastor's idiosyncrasies, exercising a patience only a saint could have. Alastor knows that he doesn't necessarily *owe* him anything, that Lucifer's not doing this to *get* something from him, but he's really done so much. And he has the desire to do something for him.

It's not a deal. Nor is it a favour.

But simply because…

he wants to.

"Are you in need of anything?" Alastor asks, rather circuitously. Lucifer puts a finger on his chin, pondering over it.

"Nah." He settles on saying. "Why?"

Alastor squints at him, feeling rather annoyed. Of course Lucifer would be absolutely unhelpful in this circumstance. He strolls beside him, thinking about how else to phrase it.

"Would you like anything?"

"For what?"

"In general."

"Nothing, really."

He lets out a noise of disgruntlement, absolutely frustrated. Sometimes he wonders if Lucifer is being difficult on purpose, but it's really just how he is. Alastor turns to look at him, trying to tamp down his rising irritation.

"I would like to do something for you." He rephrases. "Anything within my power. So tell me your wish."

Realization finally dawns on Lucifer's face. "Really? Anything?"

“Indeed.”

“Woah. But I don’t really…” Lucifer thinks about it for a moment, and then lights up. “Wait! I do have something.”

“What is it?”

Lucifer shoots him a mischievous grin, and he feels a slight pang of regret over suggesting this.

“Do you have a tail? You never actually answered that.”

And now the regret multiplies. Because he *does,* and it’s a small, fluffy thing, far too harmless to possibly intimidate anyone. But Lucifer looks so excited by the prospect of him having one, and he feels himself succumbing, yet again.

“Yes.” He admits, with some difficulty.

“SERIOUSLY?!” His golden eyes sparkle, and Alastor looks away, lest he drowns in them. “Can you show me?”

“Well! No one has ever seen it.”

Lucifer deflates at this.

“Oh, uh. Is that a no?”

“Not… exactly.” He tightens his grip on his radio cane, and then relaxes. If this is all that Lucifer wants, then what can he do but grant it? “You may. At a later time.”

“Really?” Lucifer perks up again, his elation obvious in his demeanour. “Oh, hell yeah!”

“You are far too excited about this. It is merely a tail. Nothing all that interesting.”

“But it’s a part of you.” Lucifer protests. “So I wanna see it.”

And they both freeze up at his sentence. Alastor’s caught off-guard by his honesty, yet it also makes his heart race a little, feels the blood rush to his cheeks. He can’t help but reach for Lucifer, brushing his hand against his. (The softest touch.)

When he doesn’t pull away, Alastor entwines their fingers together, squeezes them, for just a moment.

And then lets go.

It’s the briefest hand-holding, but it’s enough to make him feel content, and he turns around and -

makes eye contact with Husk, who is standing across the hallway, his face full of regret.

“Oh, shit.” Husk swallows, his eyes darting between him and Lucifer. He’s facing them directly, leaving no doubt that he witnessed everything from the past few seconds.

Fuck, Alastor swears uncharacteristically.

“Husker! Quite a pleasure to see you.” He forces his voice into a faux-pleasant tone, but his eyes morph into radio dials, tick-tick-ticking away. “Now, what exactly did you see?”

“I, uh… would you believe me if I say I didn’t see anything?”

“No!” Alastor says cheerfully. He stalks closer towards him, his tentacles writhing in the air threateningly. “I advise you to keep your mouth shut, because if you tell anyone about this, I will eat your wretched soul in one bite.”

Husk cowers at this, his fear practically tangible in the air, but then he looks at Lucifer and -

dashes right behind him, thrusting Lucifer forward as though he were a shield.

“You sure as hell won't eat me now!” Husk says quickly. Alastor blinks at this, momentarily thrown, and Husk pushes Lucifer in-between them.

“Husk. Stop hiding.” Alastor grits through his teeth, but he really can’t grab onto Husk with Lucifer in the way. They circle around each other, and Lucifer puts his hand out, trying to stop Alastor from approaching.

“Alright, alright! Husk, uh, you promise not to say anything, right?”

“I ain’t gonna say a word.”

“See?” Lucifer says, and he shoots a lopsided smile at Alastor. “So you don’t have to eat him. Right?”

Looking at his smiling face makes Alastor settle down a bit, and his eyes revert back to their usual red. At the very least, Husk wouldn’t bother spreading gossip; it’s unlike him to blab about frivolous things like this.

“Fair enough. Since you are contracted to me… I suppose there is not much to worry about.”

“What the fuck?” Husk peers over Lucifer’s shoulder, and he looks at Alastor with some disbelief. “Why’re you acting so reasonable all of a sudden?”

“Keep that attitude up, and I can change my mind! What method would you prefer I kill you in?” Alastor threatens, and Husk shakes his head rapidly.

“I’m good. Thanks for saving my hide, king.” He pats Lucifer on the shoulder, and then darts away. Once they’re absolutely certain Husk’s gone, Lucifer swivels to look at him worriedly.

“Shit. So that’s two people, right?”

Two people, and all because of Alastor. He's always been an exceedingly careful person - until he met Lucifer, that is - and now he's making mistakes left, right and centre. The realization makes him feel rather ill, and Alastor massages his temples.

"It is only two people." He decides. "Rosie won't make a peep, and Husk definitely won't say anything. So we should be in the clear."

"Y'know, you're kinda bad at this 'sneaking around' business." Lucifer comments. Alastor narrows his eyes, and he flicks Lucifer's forehead. "OW! What the fuck was that for?!"

"For speaking nonsense." Alastor says smoothly. "Well, in that case. Shall we make a wager?"

"A wager?" Lucifer rubs his sore forehead, and then looks at him. "About what?"

"For the next time, if *you* are the reason why someone finds out about us, you lose."

"Fine then! If people find out 'cause of you, then you lose!" Lucifer responds immediately, argumentative as always.

And then he looks at Alastor, bewildered.

"Wait, what do you mean, *'next time'?!"*

Husk walks away in a bit of a daze.

Shit, okay. So they're dating, he thinks. This was truly a case of him being in the wrong place, at the wrong time. Angel Dust would have been overjoyed to find out about it, but he can't say a word to him, so…

Now what? Is he supposed to leave the team? Or act as some kind of double-agent?

The worst part is that no matter what choice he makes, someone's gonna be pissed. Angel Dust, or Alastor. He doesn't want Angel Dust to feel betrayed, but he also doesn't want to face Alastor's wrath.

"Fuck. You're really in for it now." Husk mutters to himself.

Chapter End Notes

Happy 7 month-iversary of OSAS! I drew a little comic for ch. 31, which you can check out here: 1 + 2

Fun Facts:
- The ice cream scene is from (ch. 18) and the cherry stem trick is from (ch. 15)
- He asked if Alastor had a tail in (ch. 15)
- Callback to Alastor lifting him in the air in (ch. 21)
- Say Alastor's name and he'll come is from (ch. 25)
- If Alastor is struggling he should talk to Lucifer is from (ch. 31)
- Once they finished kissing, I put the next paragraph all in lower-case to soften the mood.

So I've actually wanted to write them touching tails since like - oof. CHAPTER 15, BASICALLY? I'm really excited to share the next chapter! Finally omg. I think it's only a mild Heat Warning so see you then!

Update next Friday, pls leave theories/suggestions in comments, I really enjoy reading your stuff!

The Tail

Chapter Notes

CH. 34 FANART:
- animation by: @Simphony_Da_Kat
- comics by @dirtgrubber: pt 1 + pt 2 + pt 3
- comic by @puzzledjasper: 1 + 2
- comic by: @myntesuniverse
- meme/animation by: @fourdollarwords
THANK YOU ILY! Send via Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Charlie's not the best at delivering unpleasant information. So, well… how should she soften the blow?

"Okay, everyone!" She says, trying to get their attention. She's asked them all to join her in the parlour, including her new guests, and she smiles nervously at them. "I have some good news, and some bad news. The good news is that we're going to have a party! And who doesn't love a party, right?"

"What's the bad news, sweetie?" Vaggie asks. She always gets straight to the point, and it makes Charlie's grin waver.

"Um, well… remember when Vox wanted to host a party here?"

Vaggie nods.

"This is that party. But DON'T WORRY!" Charlie says frantically. "I set up some ground rules for him this time. Like, I told him to take down his cameras around here."

"His cameras?" Lucifer echoes. Charlie catches him glancing over to Alastor, quick as a flash, before he looks back at her. "Was he watching the hotel this whole time?"

"Honestly dad, I'm not sure. He didn't actually *say* he was, but I figured it's better to be safe than sorry."

"Ugh." Angel Dust audibly groans. "But that means Val's coming, right? Charlie, do you really have to host something for those jack-offs?"

"Well, it's only for an evening, and he did promise to follow my conditions. I mean, it wouldn't be the Hazbin Hotel if we closed our doors to sinners, right?" Still, her eyes soften when she looks at him. "Angel, as always, I'm totally fine if you want to sit out."

He stares at her, before letting out a grumble. She can already feel him relenting - Angel's got a kind streak inside him, right in his core.

"Oh, Charlie. 'Course I'll be there. But why do you always haveta see the best in people?"

"Hey!" Vaggie scowls. "It's her greatest quality."

"Aw! Thank you." She wraps her arm around Vaggie's shoulders, grateful to have her by her side. "So, onto my next point! Vox and I discussed how the party should look."

She opens up her phone, and scrolls down to find the notes she wrote during their conversation. "Soooo, for the theme, he's looking for a formal, yet cutting-edge party. Something that shouts, 'the future is now!' He's unveiling a new product, apparently."

And then she casts a sweeping glance towards her new guests. There's so many now, which really does warm her heart. "As for us, we'll just help with catering and maybe some bartending. I'll draft up your schedules! But for our lovely, *new* hotel guests, you don't have to do anything except enjoy the event."

"Oh, um. I'd like to help out, if that's okay?" One of the small demons says.

"Me too, actually." Another one pipes in. Charlie almost tears up at this; she hadn't actually expected anyone to want to do work, for nothing in return. Maybe her bonding exercises were actually… working?

"O-M-G, of course!" Charlie affectionately pats both of them on their heads. Once she's done, she looks up at Alastor.

"We should probably dress up for the event again. Alastor, since you made outfits for our TV advertisement, and for the party last time, can you do it?"

"Oh?" He lifts up an eyebrow. "I see that you are leaving me with the most work."

Charlie laughs nervously. Well, he wasn't wrong about that. "I mean, um… if you don't want to, I can't force you."

"I want a new outfit!" Niffty protests, grabbing at Alastor's pant leg. "Alastor, you should give me something."

"Hmm." He looks at Niffty, and then lifts up his head. "I suppose I do have an idea. I shall make the arrangements."

"Awesome! Thanks, Alastor."

It's all been smooth sailing so far. No one seems to have an objection, and Vox was surprisingly cooperative during the whole planning process. Even the new hotel guests were receptive to her bonding ideas, albeit with some occasional hesitance. (She'll have to update Emily on their progress soon.)

Can it be? Is everything going my way for once? Charlie thinks. *Everything, except…*

she looks over at Alastor, who is situated on the far right side of the room,

and at her dad, who is standing on the left. They hadn't even exchanged a hello when they saw each other, merely walking as far away as possible. It's almost like they're getting *further* from one another.

"Okay! Thank you for listening. You're all free to go now!"

Everyone shuffles out slowly, one at a time. Once it's only her and Vaggie in the parlour, she sends out a group text:

Team H.A.R.D + Plan O.D.D
> can you all come to the investigation room?

Husk is the last to enter the room; when he arrives, he catches the final part of Charlie's sentence.

"… so now what?" She says worriedly. "What should we do next for my dad and Alastor?"

Actually, this was perfect timing. He couldn't possibly remain in this task group anymore, not after he was sworn to secrecy (he really should have left the hotel that day).

"Whatever you're planning, I want out." Husk interrupts. "In fact, consider this my resignation."

"WHAT!" Angel Dust sounds utterly offended. "You can't be fuckin' serious. Team H.A.R.D needs you! Or else we'll just become… Team A.R.D? The hell is that, even?"

"Angel. If that's your only complaint, then I'm leaving for sure."

"But we've been together on this from the start!" Angel Dust protests. Underneath his scathing tone, he seems a little sad. "Remember? Back then, it was just the two of us! And now, you're gonna, what - abandon me? What's the big idea?"

Oh, crap. See, *this* is why Husk didn't want to leave.

Even though Alastor's personal life was of no interest to him,

even though he didn't care about the romantic affairs of the King of Hell,

even though he'd rather not spend his free time theorizing what the hell they're up to,

(in spite of it all),

these past few months have shown him a side of Angel Dust he hasn't seen before. Husk likes seeing him getting all fired up about the latest clues, enjoys spending time with him slinking around on the down-low. He *will* miss all of that, if he goes.

"Well, how 'bout this?" Husk decides to throw out a suggestion, something that Angel's brought up many times. "I'll kiss you if you'll let me leave."

Angel Dust's jaw drops. He actually considers it for a moment, expression thoughtful, and then he shakes his head furiously. "The fuck! You think you can mess around with my head like this? I can't be swayed that easily. What am I, a cheap whore?"

"Aren't you a porn star?"

"Yeah, but an expensive one. And don't you forget about that." Angel Dust scowls at him. "Why do ya wanna leave, anyway?"

"That's right, Husk." Rosie interjects. She's been quiet up until now, and she looks at him in a rather calculating manner. "What is your reasoning?"

"None of your business." Husk grumbles. They make eye contact, and he stares at her questioningly. Her eyes betray nothing, but there's something in her tone…

Does she know something?

But it's not like he can just ask her. If Alastor knew that he was running around, blabbing about his Very Secret Relationship, he'd rip his head right off. And it's not as though he could hide behind Lucifer every single time.

"Well, fine." Husk relents. "I'll stay, but I ain't contributing anymore. Consider me a neutral party."

"Good! You better be here." Angel Dust grumbles. He looks rather crestfallen, but between facing Angel Dust's disappointment or Alastor's wrath, he'd much rather deal with Angel.

Husk is acting rather oddly. Rosie thinks. She stares at him, but he's resolutely avoiding her eye contact. *Does he know something?*

Although, she did promise Alastor that she would keep it a secret. Rosie shrugs, dismissing the thought altogether, and focuses her attention back on Charlie.

It's dreadfully boring being alone.

Alastor drums his fingers on his radio equipment, wondering what he ought to do now. He has half a mind to start a broadcast to fill the time.

However.

The last time he had commenced his show, Niffty and Lucifer accompanied him. Alastor looks at the empty seats beside him, and now he feels less inclined to even bother with the whole thing.

Where is his royal majesty, anyway?

He laces his fingers under his chin, pondering. Lucifer had disappeared right after their morning meeting with nary a passing glance. He would usually acknowledge Alastor privately - in some form or another - and so it was quite mysterious, indeed.

"What exactly is going through that head of yours?" Alastor murmurs. He gets up from his seat, and peers through his radio tower window. If he were Lucifer, he would probably be located…

Ah-ha.

Right there, on the roof.

In an instant, Alastor moves through his shadow, and stealthily emerges behind him. He half-expects Lucifer to yelp at his sudden arrival, but he doesn't even turn around, only saying:

"Alastor."

“Oh? I hadn’t realized you possessed psychic capabilities.”

Lucifer finally swivels his head, and there’s a mischievous grin on his face. “It’s because only *you* would be this noisy.”

“Me? Noisy?” Alastor puts a hand on his chest, mildly offended. “You can’t possibly be serious.”

“Oh, I am. Blah-blah-blah, all day, all night. That’s you.”

And now he’s extremely offended. “Well! If that’s the case, then I shall take my leave. I see my presence is unwanted.”

He turns around, his shoes crunching on the tiles as he walks. He’s only taken a few steps when Lucifer cuts in, his voice slightly panicked.

“Wait - just, wait! I didn’t… I didn’t mean it. I like hearing you speak.”

Alastor pauses his movement. He feels a little more appeased, but he still has the urge to mess with him, and so he glances over at Lucifer.

“What did you say? I didn’t quite catch that!”

Lucifer lets out an exasperated scoff, but the sound is tinged with affection. “I said, I-LIKE-HEARING-YOU-SPEAK.”

“Hmm. Much better.” Alastor says brightly. In a single stride, he closes the distance between them, and he sits down beside Lucifer. They gaze up at the moon together, quietly.

Which is a little out of the ordinary, since Lucifer usually fills any sort of silence with jibber-jabber. Alastor turns to face him, studying his profile.

I suppose I shall have to needle him for answers.

“And what are you doing up here?” Alastor eventually asks. “I don’t believe the moon makes for good conversation.”

“Yeah. It’s always sucked at talking.” He replies, sounding strangely serious. Lucifer crosses his legs, and now their knees brush up against each other, just the slightest bit. “I came here to clear my head.”

“What a dangerous idea. Isn’t your head already empty to begin with?”

He waits for Lucifer to fire back a cut-throat retort; he’d even accept a derisive snort. Instead, Lucifer gazes at him from the corner of his eye, his expression solemn.

“Well, I just kinda… I felt bad.”

Alastor waits for him to elaborate.

But he doesn't. Rather, Lucifer fiddles with one of the tiles on the roof, his dark grey fingers scratching away at it absentmindedly. Alastor has half a mind to grab his hand, to stop him from doing it.

"You are full of half-answers tonight."

"Sorr- I mean, uh." Lucifer hesitates. "I want to apologize. Can - can I?"

"Well! It depends on your reason."

Lucifer's lips quirk up a little at the corners. "Woah. Really? You're not trying to beat me up just from suggesting it? Are you getting soft, *Alastor?"*

Hearing Lucifer speak his name makes him stiffen up, but he laughs it off instead. "Ha-ha-HA! What a preposterous idea. I was only curious about your state of mind."

Lucifer takes his time thinking, still scratching away at the tile, his slender fingers digging up dust and debris. It looks rather painful for him, and,

without much thought,

he grabs onto Lucifer's hand. Envelops him entirely in his palm. Lucifer stills, and they look at each other.

"You ought to quit that." Alastor murmurs. "You will damage the hotel."

"The hotel?" Lucifer echoes.

"Yes. And I would rather not add 'fixing the roof' to my workload!"

"Right."

Lucifer doesn't sound like he believes him, but he indulges him anyway, a half-smile forming on his face. He keeps his hand in Alastor's slack grip, and they remain connected like that. Just the loosest touch. Able to be retracted at once, if someone were to stumble upon them.

Lucifer dithers for a second, and then slowly starts to speak.

"I guess, if you wanna know… it totally slipped my mind that Vox would have security cameras. You think he saw us?"

Alastor blinks at this. He hadn't expected *this* to be the topic on Lucifer's mind. "Vox? What is there to be concerned about?"

"Well, I mean. He has some sort of weird vendetta against you, right? What if he tries to spread pictures again? Like last time."

Ah. Does he feel some type of responsibility? Alastor thinks. *But if one were to assign blame, it would not be on Lucifer, surely.*

“He may have seen us.” He says, completely unconcerned. “But there are a few things you should know about him.”

“Like what?”

“One,” Alastor lifts up a finger, “he is not the type of person to pull the same tricks twice. I highly doubt he would bother spreading images once again. Two,” he lifts up another finger, “his opinion means very little to me. Whether he knows about us, or doesn’t know… I simply do not care.”

And then he cackles, feeling greatly amused. “In fact, it probably upsets him that I am enjoying myself. Which is hilarious!”

“Really? It’s not a big deal, then?”

“Not at all.” He fixes him with a look. “So I reject your apology. Rescind it.”

Lucifer cracks a bigger smile at this. He squeezes Alastor’s hand for just a second before pulling away, intertwining his own fingers together. After a moment, Alastor withdraws as well. Although, it feels a little odd, ~~not having Lucifer’s hand to hold-~~

Do not think about it, Alastor chides himself.

“I have another question.” Lucifer’s voice cuts through his messy thoughts, and Alastor raises his head.

“So curious today, aren’t you.”

“Maybe.” Lucifer looks at him unwaveringly. “Is that a problem?”

It’s obvious that he’s throwing the ball back to his court, requesting for Alastor’s consent, asking if it’s okay to press. He considers it for a moment, before letting out a sigh. Giving in to Lucifer, once more.

“What is it?”

Lucifer brightens up at his allowance. “Well… you know how I was up in Heaven, and I didn’t have my phone and stuff? You went to Vox to ask for his security cameras. Which is, uh. I can’t believe you went to ask him.”

“Oh, it was definitely a last resort.” Alastor's smile twitches, vexed at the recollection. “He was quite an eyesore, but it worked out in the end. He did know your location, after all.”

“I guess I want to ask, why?”

“Why what?”

“Why did you go to him?”

They pause here, and Lucifer looks strangely pensive - lost in thought - overthinking. He seems far too worried for Alastor's liking. It makes him want to admit the truth; something that he had planned on taking to his grave.

It pains him to say this, but…

"I deceived you."

Lucifer stares at him in confusion. "Uh, what?"

"Regarding my scar. It did not actually bother me. It was merely a surface wound, more of an aesthetic issue than anything else, really. So I didn't require healing whatsoever."

And Alastor grits this part through his teeth,

"But it hurt elsewhere, when you were missing. And *that* is why I went to Vox."

"Really?" Lucifer knits his brows together, full of concern. "Where? Want me to heal that instead?"

"It is not something your powers can remedy." Alastor says slowly. "As it was… an ache… in my heart."

Lucifer doesn't seem to understand at first. But eventually, clarity appears in his eyes, and he shoots him a lopsided smile. "Are you trying to say that your heart hurt? Because, what. You missed me?"

His initial impulse is to lie.

But he's tired of lying.

"With every ounce of my being."

Lucifer stares at him, his eyes growing bigger and bigger. Alastor turns away, unable to face him, because it's true, because he *did* miss him, because he'll continue to miss him whenever he's gone, past, present, and future. It's unfortunately part of his new disposition now. Just something he has to live with.

(Something that he'll have to slowly adjust to.)

"Now! Onto my main reason for being here." Alastor forces his voice to be chipper, trying to maintain some facade of composure. Lucifer jumps a little, clearly surprised by his tonal shift.

"You didn't come find me because you were bored?"

Alastor tenses up, because Lucifer had unwittingly hit the nail on the head. Not that he would ever disclose that to him.

"Of course not. Let's depart from the hotel, shall we?"

“Oh - uh.” Lucifer turns it over in his head, before nodding. “I guess I’m free. What do you want to do?”

“It is not about what *I* want to do, but rather, what *you* want to do.”

Lucifer groans at this. “Aw, c’mon! What is this, a riddle?”

“Incorrect.” Alastor lets out a harrumph, annoyed. “I recall a certain somebody asking to see my tail. Or do you no longer wish to see it?”

“OH!”

In a split second, Lucifer makes a portal, and he shoves Alastor right through it.

Alastor whips his head around once Lucifer steps through the portal. He shoots him a murderous glare, which *might* have looked threatening, had he not been completely sprawled across the floor.

“For what reason did you push me?”

“Just gotta get you here before you change your mind.” Lucifer offers a hand out to him. “I’ll help you up.”

“I do not require your assistance.” Despite his bitter tone, he still accepts his hand, and Lucifer pulls him up to his feet in one smooth motion. Once he’s upright, Alastor inspects his place with a studious eye.

“Are we inside your mansion? I don’t believe you’ve invited me in before.” He says. “I am only familiar with your little jazz club and your forest outside.”

“Oh, yeah. TA-DA!” Lucifer sweeps his arms with a flourish. “You’re one of the lucky few who’s been able to come in. What do you think?”

“It appears to be in shambles.”

Lucifer gasps, scandalized. “The first thing you do is make fun of my house?”

“Well! Let’s look at our surroundings, hmm? Peeling paint,” Alastor points to the walls, “rubber ducks abound,” he kicks one of them (squeak), “and pictures of Charlie *everywhere.”* He taps on one of the framed photos. “You really need to organize.”

Alastor’s words sting, but admittedly, it’s a bit of a mess. It’s been a while since he’s tidied up, and even longer since he’s had anyone come over.

With a snap of his fingers, Lucifer whisks everything way, making his room so immaculate it practically sparkles. He even teleports the pictures of Charlie (just temporarily!), wanting his place to be as free from prying eyes as possible.

“How ‘bout now?”

Alastor looks around before nodding, his expression pleased. “Acceptable.”

And then he leans against Lucifer’s desk, his stance elegantly nonchalant. He has his red fingers gripping the edge of the table, and they stand on opposite ends of the room, observing each other without a word.

“Alright, then.” Lucifer finally says, breaking the silence. “Got any other complaints?”

“None whatsoever.” He responds. “But that is subject to change.”

Alastor drums his fingers across the tabletop, nails click-click-clicking on the surface. He glances at Lucifer, and then…

“I suppose I won’t delay the inevitable.”

His tail! He thinks excitedly. Lucifer doesn’t want to rush/spook/force him into anything, so he shifts his weight from one foot to the other, waiting silently for Alastor’s next move.

And what he chooses to do is remove his long, red jacket, setting it atop of the table. Hoist off his suspenders, letting it fall to either side of his hips.

But then something else occurs, something magical -

ridiculous -

outrageous, even -

because that’s when Alastor slowly starts to unbuckle his belt.

“WHATAREYOUDOING?” Lucifer squawks, sentence so rushed it comes out as one word. Alastor pauses his movement, staring down at him like he’s a moron.

“My tail is located on my lower back.” Alastor says coolly, so matter-of-fact that he sounds like he’s talking about the weather. “If you would like to see it, my pants are slightly in the way, wouldn’t you say?”

Oh. Lucifer digests this information, and finds the reasoning sound enough. “Right. Carry on, I… guess?”

But truthfully, he doesn’t even know what to say at this point. All he can do is watch,

watch as Alastor turns around, his back facing towards him,

watch him pull his shirt up just a little,

watch the way he tugs his pants down just a bit,

watch him reveal the slightest sliver of skin, not enough to see anything particularly incriminating, but Lucifer can see the beginnings of -

a small, fluffy tail, tipped with black.

OHHHHHHHHHHHHH. SHIT.

Lucifer has never run so fast in his life, slipping and skidding all the way until he reaches Alastor. He crouches down, trying to get a better look at his tail.

“So cute!” Lucifer coos. “It’s fun-sized!”

Alastor looks at him over his shoulder, his deer ears pressed down on his head. “Will this suffice?”

“What, that’s it?” Lucifer wrenches his eyes away from his tail to look at his face instead - but his expression gives nothing away about his current emotional state. “Can’t I look at it a little longer?”

Alastor tightens his grip on the edge of the table, and then relaxes. Turns around to face the wall, and says:

“I’ll grant you one minute.”

“Okay, okay. I hear you.”

Whatever - one minute is plenty. He’ll take whatever Alastor is willing to give him.

Besides, he’s quite the sight to see, what with Alastor slightly bent over, hands now splayed on the table’s surface. And Lucifer’s hyper-focused on how his tail twitches just a little in the air, the way the deep curve of his spine disappears underneath his shirt…

Lucifer lifts up his hand, hovering right over his tail. Wanting to touch, but not being able to.

And then he lowers his arm, feeling a little guilty. He really shouldn’t be doing things like that, when Alastor had already allowed for so much.

Don’t Even Think About It, Idiot.

But the action seems to catch Alastor's attention, and he peeks over his shoulder again, his tone dry.

"I assume you'd like to touch my tail."

"Well… yeah." Lucifer wrings his hands together nervously. "How d'you know?"

"Oh, the reason is quite simple. It's because you are remarkably predictable!"

"What the - hey!"

Alastor's grin widens at his protest. "But you know that I am right."

"What am I gonna do next, then?" He fires back. Alastor's crimson eyes scour over him, so penetrating that he feels his breath catch in his throat.

"You will probably retreat, and teleport away." He murmurs. "Instead of doing what you really want to do."

His message lingers between them, settling over like a fine mist. He's so cryptic. So perplexing. Is he issuing him a challenge, or is he granting him permission? Lucifer looks between Alastor's

face

and tail,

face

and tail,

face

and tail-

Fuck it.

Lucifer places one hand on his tail - runs his fingers through it - feels its softness and fluffiness and featheriness and whatever other word describes pure downy perfection, because dear god, *this is what Heaven is, isn't it?*

But underneath Lucifer's gentle caress, Alastor visibly stiffens up, fingers clawing at the table in an almost desperate nature. Lucifer pauses, his hand still grasping onto his tail.

"Am I hurting you?"

"No." Alastor grits through this teeth. "It is only…"

"Only what?"

Alastor dips his head down, his voice sounding a little strangled when he says:

“Are you having fun?”

And he only now realizes that Alastor is completely bent over the table, pinned in place by Lucifer’s arms, and he immediately takes a giant step back.

“Right! Uh… wow!” *Fuck, it’s hot in here. Why’s it so hot?* He laughs nervously, trying to return to their casual normalcy. “Thanks for that. Y’know, you have a lovely, lovely tail. Top-notch, actually!”

Alastor straightens up and turns to face him, leaning against the table again. His pants are still infuriatingly unbuttoned, the sharp dips of his hipbones an intoxicating sight. Lucifer forces his gaze away - conjures up a portal - places one foot inside -

“Well, guess we’re done, ha-ha! Yep. Catch you next time-”

“See?” Alastor’s voice cuts through the air, his tone hoarse. “You are teleporting away. As I knew you would.”

Lucifer stops in his tracks; his portal dissipates, flickering into a burst of gold.

“We’re done though, right?” He manages to say.

“You may be finished, but I am not.”

Alastor beckons him closer with his finger. And, like he’s in a trance, Lucifer feels compelled to walk forward, to go back to him. He ceases moving when they’re about a meter away from each other, close but not too close.

“Finished with what?” His voice comes out as more of a whisper.

Alastor reaches both arms out,

slides his fingers into Lucifer’s belt loops,

and yanks him close.

The action makes Lucifer’s forehead bump gently against his chest, rendering any distance between them nonexistent. When he lifts his head up to look at him, Alastor is already staring down, his red eyes piercing in the dark.

“You seemed to enjoy touching my tail.”

His radio filter slips off, voice so dark it sends a shiver down his spine.

“And so I would like to touch yours, *Lucifer.”*

Chapter End Notes

I drew something for ch. 10 here: on twitter + tumblr

And for ch. 33: on twitter + tumblr

I'm travelling next week, so I can't update, sadly. See you in 2 weeks? Mark your calendars for Oct. 11! I do have some stuff I'm cooking for radioapple on my social media, so you'll see me around!

Fun Facts:
- Alastor making clothes for the cast is from the show (ep 1) and from (ch. 9 + 10)
- Their radio show was from (ch. 13)
- Parallels Lucifer popping up on the roof to go look for Alastor (ch. 14) and also bringing back Lucifer talking to the moon
- Parallels Alastor asking Lucifer to speak louder in (ch. 8)
- Alastor went to look for Vox in (ch. 24)
- Also ofc they've been moon-gazing all throughout the story!
- Vox spread pictures of them in (ch. 10 + 11)
- Lucifer's jazz club is from (ch. 28) and the forest is (ch. 32)
- In ch. 16, they don't help each other up from the floor; in ch. 28, when lucifer offers his hand out to him, alastor hesitates before accepting; and in this chapter, he accepts his help immediately!

My QUESTION for you this time: who do you think will find out about Alastor and Lucifer next? Leave your guesses below!

The Evening Sojourn

Chapter Notes

CH. 35 FANART:
- comic by: @dirtgrubber
- comic by: @myntesuniverse
- animation by: @Simphony_Da_Kat
- drawn by: @agentofanarchy110
- comic by: @mrnicklower008
- I wanted to share this OSAS meme!

Your wonderful work and artistic skill makes me WEEP! Thank you so much I LOVE YOUUUUU 😭 Send me anything on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites or Twitter: @morningstar_ao3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Charlie's standing in the Heaven Embassy, waiting for the call to connect. When the fuzzy figure of Emily appears, she brightens up immediately.

"Hey, Em!"

"Charlie!" Emily says cheerfully. "Gosh, I wish I could give you a hug right now. It's a shame that these are holograms, right?"

"Air hug?" Charlie asks. They both mime out hugging each other, and then they giggle afterwards.

"I guess you have some updates for me?"

"Yeah!" Charlie pulls out her notebook, and she flips through until she lands on the right page. "We have a couple of new sinners at our hotel. I think they have a lot of potential! They're really quite lovable, although, um… not all of them are super *interested* in what we do. I think some of them are just there for free food."

"Really?" Emily sounds concerned. "I guess that does make sense. Everyone has different motives, right?"

"Yeah, I know. We are down in Hell, after all." Charlie deflates a little, but when she flips to the next page, she waves the notebook at Emily. "But, OH! We have a party coming up, and a few of them actually offered to help out. So that's something!"

"A party?" Emily squeals. "That sounds so fun."

Normally, it *would* be fun, but because she's hosting it for Vox, she feels some apprehension. Even so, she doesn't want to scare Emily away. "I think so, too! We'll have food, and music, and live entertainment. And hopefully, I can recruit some more sinners for the Hotel in the process."

"Eek! I'm so happy to hear that! Well, let me know if there are any more developments." Emily thinks for a second. "Actually, Charlie, after the party, do you want to come up and talk about it in-person?"

"Wait, really? You want me to come back to Heaven?"

"Yeah! Sera's been asking about you, actually. I think she's kinda curious."

She gasps at this, feeling genuinely awed. "Okay! I'll guarantee that the party has NO PROBLEMS, then!"

This party has to go well, Charlie thinks. *I'll make sure of it.*

Alastor's going to be the death of him. Absolutely. His tombstone will have *Here Lies Lucifer, Killed by The Radio Demon* engraved upon the surface.

"You want to… see my tail?" Lucifer can't help but be a little breathless. He's pulled flush against Alastor, and he feels incredible at this proximity.

"Why, yes. I only got to see it for a little bit during our fight. That is rather unfair, isn't it?"

Lucifer manages to nod, but to be honest, he's not really listening. Alastor could have said something illogical like 'good sir, why don't you go and tap-dance on a tightrope for me?' and he'd agree to it.

"I'll have to change into my full form."

"Then by all means."

He finally lets go of Lucifer's belt loops, retreating one step back. Alastor doesn't bother adjusting his clothes; his pants are still unbuckled, his shirt untucked. Unkempt, yet still dignified. The embodiment of a walking oxymoron.

Well, if all he wants to see is my tail… fine.

Lucifer takes off his jacket, vest, and hat, tossing them right on top of Alastor's overcoat. Their state of undress matches each other, and he pauses for a moment.

"I'm feeling a sense of déjà vu."

Alastor tilts his head. "How so?"

"I mean, we're taking our clothes off for a second time." Lucifer sends him a lopsided smile. "And you initiated for both of them."

Alastor looks at him rather strangely. There's something unreadable flickering in his eyes, a kind of uncertainty, and he tightens his grip on the table's edge.

"Hmm. Now that you mention it…"

He trails off. And then, so quiet it's barely audible,

"How peculiar."

Lucifer frowns at this. "What is?"

But Alastor just fixes him with a steely gaze, clearly unwilling to share the thoughts that plague his mind. He's like that, at times. Just a puzzle that doesn't want to be solved.

"Continue." He orders instead.

Lucifer rolls his eyes, but he dutifully obliges, concentrating on his metamorphosis. It's a pretty fast process - his six wings spread out, his tail flicks lazily in the air, his horns extend from his forehead - and once he's done, he looks over at Alastor.

"Happy now?"

Without a warning, Alastor grabs his tail.

It's so sudden that he jumps at the contact, holding his breath while Alastor inspects the heart-shaped tip. He's gripping it firmly, but not painfully, and his fingers slide down the length. It takes all his strength not to yank his tail out of Alastor's grasp, because…

it feels kinda good.

"It is longer than I remembered." Alastor's voice pierces through his thoughts, sounding rather taut. "Where does it end?"

"I guess, same as you? It's on my lower back."

Alastor absentmindedly strokes his tail, his long red fingers trailing over him in a dizzying manner. Eventually, he brings his hand to a stop, and his eyes flit towards Lucifer's face.

"I would like to see the base."

Lucifer blinks in confusion.

“What?”

“I am saying to turn around.” He lets go of Lucifer’s tail, and gestures impatiently. “Did you require a demonstration?”

“Uh, no, I got it.” He huffs, turning on his heel. “You’re so goddamn rude-”

The words die in his mouth, because that’s when he feels Alastor’s hand pressing on the small of his back. It’s a pleasant pressure, warm and stabilizing, and his fingertips trace down the dip of Lucifer’s spine.

“As you were saying?”

Lucifer shakes his head, not trusting himself to speak. Alastor takes this as his cue to tug at his shirt, pulling it up in an excruciatingly slow manner. He takes longer than expected - longer than necessary, really - and Alastor leans in closer, murmuring by his ear.

“Your wings are quite large.”

“These ol’ things?” Lucifer tries to sound casual, but internally, his heart is hammering away against his ribcage. “Yeah. They’re kind of a pain to preen.”

“Are they, now?” Alastor says thoughtfully. Lucifer half-expects him to elaborate on the subject, but he only says,

“I still cannot see the base.”

He gulps, but he dutifully pulls the zipper down on his trousers, hooks his thumbs over the waistband, tugs it down

little-by-little-by-little-by-little-by…

“Should be visible now, right?”

He can feel Alastor’s hand ghost downwards, and then -

he touches the base of his tail, right where his spine and tailbone meet.

Oh, fuuuuuuuuck.

Lucifer subconsciously wraps his tail around Alastor’s wrist, encircling him tightly. An involuntary response, but a response, nonetheless. It’s been so long since someone grabbed his tail - the last time was Alastor, just a brief moment up in Heaven, and before that was… what, decades ago?

“So very handy.” Alastor sounds, strangely enough, a little winded. “As I had expected.”

He pulls Lucifer in closer, gently tugging at him until his back is pressed into Alastor's chest. The position is sending his imagination into overdrive, and he turns around, wanting to maybe say, 'hey, we can stop now.'

(Should probably stop now, before he does something improper.)

But Alastor's face is startlingly close -

so near that it makes Lucifer leap away and yank his tail out of his grip. They both stare at each other, mirroring the other's look of surprise.

Shit.

"I see." Alastor says casually, but his deer ears are pulled back, and his body is completely rigid. "I suppose you've satisfied my whims. Good job!"

He hoists his suspenders back over his shoulders, and smoothly pulls his jacket on. He looks put together - unflappable - like nothing has happened. But there's a palpable discomfort in the air, and it's coming from the both of them.

Lucifer's rooted to the spot, paralyzed in full-out panic mode, because Alastor must have the wrong idea, probably thinks that he hated it, when in all honesty…

"You may depart first." Alastor's voice breaks his train of thought. "And I will follow after-"

"Wait."

Lucifer grabs onto both of his arms, not wanting him to leave, not letting him go. Like hell they're gonna separate without clearing the air first.

"Do *you* want to leave?" He blurts out. "Because I'd rather be with you."

There's a manic look in Alastor's eyes, just like when they were making out on the piano. Lucifer can practically see the rise and fall of his chest; his breathing is a little erratic, his expression betraying the slightest hint of vulnerability. A crack in his impenetrable armour.

Alastor averts his gaze. Doesn't respond, initially. Lucifer's embarrassed to admit this, but his own hands are shaking a bit as he grips onto his biceps. Maybe he can understand Alastor a bit better than other people, but it's not like he can read his mind.

And then,

blessedly,

Alastor places one of his hands on top of his. It's the lightest touch. Barely even constitutes a graze, really, but it makes Lucifer's trembling lessen.

"I would prefer…"

Alastor says, his voice small,

“to stay with you… as well.”

Lucifer relaxes his grip, relief shooting through his entire body. And it’s due to that reassurance that he says something truly, colossally dumb:

“Then come to bed with me.”

Alastor gapes at him, his eyes wide. *“Pardon?”*

“To sleep!” Lucifer amends quickly. “Like, uh. That’s it. *Just-lying-down-side-by-side.* You know? No big deal!”

It is a big deal, though. Alastor fidgets a little under his hold; for some reason, his mind unwittingly compares him with a wild animal, skittish and untamed.

“To sleep?” Alastor echoes, gazing at him. His eyes resemble bottomless pools, and Lucifer feels like he’s drowning in them, unable to see through the depths.

But then the cloudiness clears up.

“Well! I understand the desire. I am so very delightful to be around, after all.” Alastor sounds absolutely unaffected, like he couldn’t care less. “Let’s reconvene in the evening. I shall come find you in your bedchambers.”

And he disappears into shadow without waiting for an answer.

Alastor walks back and forth across his bedroom, his mind swirling with a whirlwind of thoughts.

Sleeping together? He thinks frantically. *What sort of nonsense have I just agreed to?*

He quickens his pace, striding so hurriedly he’s practically about to break into a jog. It’s awful, whatever this is - this… this ridiculousness that he feels, because -

BANG!

He collides right into his bookshelf.

“This… fucking…” Alastor swears, rubbing his shoulder from the pain. It’s the second time he’s walked into his bookcase, and both times have been due to Lucifer. He turns away, settling down atop of his bed so that he won’t bump into something again.

“Oh, you.” He glares rather balefully at the objects across the ledge, the rubber ducks taunting him even from afar. He had placed the golden star sticker onto the shelf as well, and it gleams so brightly he has to avert his eyes. “You really are such a handful.”

Quite frankly, it’s revolting to even *entertain* the idea of sleeping with Lucifer.*

(*Because

he

doesn’t

find

it

revolting

whatsoever.)

Alastor gnashes his teeth, grinding away at them relentlessly. What is he supposed to do, now? All he wants to do is take in Lucifer - wants to consume him - and not in the way he devours souls.

He clenches his bedsheets under his hand, creasing it into a million little wrinkles. Then, he relinquishes his grip, trying to control his ever-spiralling thoughts.

~~*I want to feel him -*~~

~~*be a part of him, body and soul -*~~

and is that really too much to ask?

“You fool.” Alastor snarls at himself. “Do not even think about it.”

He gets up from his bed with some difficulty, already knowing that he’s fighting a losing battle. Alastor vs. Alastor. Never a good idea, really.

In lieu of worrying about it any further, he goes off to shower.

Lucifer takes an extra-long shower today.

He even blowdries his hair, which transforms his normally slicked back hair into a fluffy, wavy mess. He tries to comb it down, to no avail.

I'm not gonna gel it right before sleeping, he thinks, glowering at himself in the mirror. In the corner of his eye, he spies the red bobby pins that Alastor had gifted him. Before he can second-guess himself, he slides them across his bangs, pinning them into an X-shape.

There. At least his hair is a *little* neater now.

He rifles through his closet, trying to figure out what to wear for tonight. He hasn't thought much about his sleepwear in years - and that particular reason is why all his pyjamas look a little worse for wear.

"Don't I have anything nicer?" Lucifer pulls out shirt after shirt, tossing them aside impatiently. If only he had something better - sexier - okay, SCRATCH THAT, not sexy, but. Please. Something other than his worn out pyjamas.

"All of these *suck."*

With a wave of his hand, he gets rid of all the rejected clothes from his room, and creates a new set instead. It's nothing fancy, just a hoodie and matching shorts, but at least they don't have holes in the sleeves. He looks at himself in the mirror, mildly satisfied with his appearance.

Until his eyes hone in on the fuzzy duck slippers he's wearing.

And now he feels an abnormal sense of hatred towards them.

"These dumb little…" Lucifer kicks them off, "or… wait, should I wear these?" puts them back on, "NO," kicks them off again -

C-A-L-M-D-O-W-N. He pulls the slippers back on. *It's just sleeping, just sleeping, sleeping, sleep…*

After his shower, Alastor stares at his closet.

So what exactly is he supposed to wear? He hasn't actually done this before, unless attending 'sleepovers' when he was a human child counts. Even then, that had occurred several hundred years ago.

He rifles through the hangers, pulling out what he usually goes to bed with. Just a black button-up and long pants. Should be presentable enough. After he slips them on, he appraises himself in the mirror.

Hmm. I seem to be a little under-dressed.

He leans closer to his reflection, trying to figure out what's missing, and then brightens up.

"Aha!"

He snaps his fingers, materializing a red silk robe in his hands. He pulls it over his shoulders in one fluid motion, and cinches it at the waist. Much better.

Lucifer turns off the lights, and carefully lights up a few candles instead.

Which, bad idea. NOPE. It somehow looks simultaneously sleazy/spooky, so he hastily blows the candles out and flicks the lights back on.

"Okay, uh…" And now he doesn't know what to do, except wait. Alastor hadn't specified a time, which in hindsight was a recipe for disaster.

So Lucifer pulls the bed sheets taut, trying to make it look neater.

Sits on his bed, drumming his fingers on his knees.

Gets back up, standing in place.

Paces, and paces, and paces, and -

Oh, god. He's second-guessing everything, and now he wants to just call the whole thing off.

Alastor puts his hands on his face, and takes in a deep breath.

Should he even *go* there? Lucifer was just prattling on as per usual, was he not? Running his mouth before thinking? Surely he didn't actually intend to extend the invite. Lucifer must be regretting even asking at the moment.

Lucifer runs his fingers through his hair anxiously - and hits the X-shaped pins instead. He stares at them in the mirror, watching as they glint under the ceiling light.

Those hair pins always remind him of poker night. How Alastor had tucked his hair back, and fastened his locks in place for him. It had been a strangely tender action, careful and gentle. So unlike his usual violent tendencies.

He can't help but smile a little at the memory. They had been only friends, at the time. How was he supposed to predict that things would unfold in this way?

Lucifer drops his hand to his side, and clenches it into a determined fist.

Whatever. I asked him over, because I want him here. Since he accepted, he must be interested in the idea, too.

And with that, Lucifer sits back down on the edge of his bed, waiting patiently for Alastor to appear.

Alastor pulls his hands down onto his neck. He will have to sweep his agitation under the rug, because he’s rather keen on seeing Lucifer again. He can own up to that, at least.

And, for just a second, their thoughts align perfectly:

Tonight has to be perfect.

All of a sudden, Lucifer can see shadowy tendrils emerge in the air, a clear indicator for Alastor’s presence.

“Evening!” Alastor says cheerily. He’s standing right in front of him, and it’s the first time he’s seen him dressed in such a relaxed state. His red robe is really eye-catching under the light, and Lucifer holds his arm out to touch the edge of his sleeve, admiring how it’s silky to the touch.

“Oh, wow.” Lucifer murmurs. “This looks kinda awesome.”

“Are you speaking about the robe?”

“Yeah. Maybe I should make one of these, too.”

Alastor gives him a long, sideways glance, looking deep in contemplation. Eventually, he slips his robe off his shoulders-

And throws it at Lucifer’s face. His whole world becomes rosy in hue, and he rips the robe off of his face, scowling all the while.

“What the - *why?!”*

“Keep it.” Alastor’s tone is rather serious. Lucifer blinks at this, and he clutches the fabric tighter.

“Seriously?”

“You really shouldn’t ask so many questions.” Annnnnnd now he’s back to being snide. Great. Alastor sidles down beside him, crossing his long legs gracefully. “Whatever you make will pale in comparison, anyway!”

“Uh, I would create an epic robe, you asshole!”

“An *epic* robe? What would that even look like?” Alastor taps on his duck slippers with his radio cane. “Some sort of duck imagery, perhaps? Don’t you tire of being so mundane?”

“Hey!” Lucifer aggressively waves the robe at him. “You just make everything RED!”

He kicks his duck slippers off, trying to get more comfortable; as he criss-crosses his legs, his shorts start to rise up a little, exposing more of his thighs. He turns around, wanting to yell at Alastor some more, but he falters when he catches him staring, at, uh…

Is he… staring at his… legs?

“You good?” Lucifer manages to ask. It makes him snap out of it, and Alastor hastily pulls the robe over his legs, covering him up like it’s a blanket.

“Oh, I am perfectly fine.” Alastor sounds unruffled as always, but he’s purposefully staring off into the distance, his hand placed on his neck uncomfortably. Lucifer observes him, a little stunned.

Woah. Alastor’s kind of... is he feeling shy?

“You’re sweet, huh.” He can’t help but say. It makes Alastor glare at him from the corner of his eye, his expression clearly disgruntled.

“You are very unusual, Lucifer. I believe that others would disagree with that statement.”

“Well, they’re wrong, then.”

Alastor eyes widen by the slightest margin, but he doesn’t respond. They end up lapsing into silence; Lucifer drums his fingers on his knees, Alastor spins his radio cane idly, and neither of them seem to know what to say. What would be a good segue, anyway? Are they supposed to just go to sleep immediately, or what?

Lucifer turns to him, feeling rather awkward. “So, uh… what side of the bed do you want?”

“Well.” Alastor tightens his grip on his cane. “Which side do you prefer?”

“Me? Maybe the left.”

“Then I shall have the left side.”

Lucifer groans. “You douchebag-”

Alastor guffaws at this, and his laughter breaks the tension. “Oh? So you won’t give it to me, then?”

“You just want it because *I* want it!”

Lucifer shoves his shoulder-

“You’re being awfully selfish.”

Alastor pushes him back-

“Uh, you don’t even care which side you sleep on!”

Lucifer thrusts his arm forward, but Alastor grabs onto his hand and gravity does the trick and sends them both sprawling down onto the bed. He’s lying on top of Alastor, their bodies completely pressed against each other.

And it feels…

So.

Fucking.

Phenomenal.

Lucifer props himself up, gazing down at him, his hands situated on either side of Alastor’s head. He’s essentially boxed him in, trapped him underneath his arms, and he has the urge to run away.

Until Alastor's words echo in his head,

"You will probably retreat, and teleport away. Instead of doing what you really want to do."

So he stays there, still on top of him. Alastor tightens his grip on the bed sheets, but other than that, he doesn't seem to have an objection, instead saying:

"I suppose you've won this little round." His voice is rather faint. "The spoils go to the victor."

"The what?"

"Did you forget? The. Left. Side. Of. The. Bed." Alastor enunciates one syllable at a time. "Your memory really needs work, Lucifer."

Before he can fire back a retort, a loud banging resounds in the vents above them, and they both freeze up at the sound. Lucifer slowly lifts his head, and Alastor peers up as well.

"What the… is that a rat?"

"It sounds a little too boisterous to be a rat." Alastor's deer ears twitch as he listens. "Some other creature of the night, perhaps-"

"Alastor! Lucifer! It's me!" The muffled voice of Niffty responds. "I got stuck in the vents."

"Uh. Why?" Lucifer asks.

"I was chasing a bug." Niffty clangs against the vents some more. "Can one of you help me down?"

"Oh!" Lucifer looks down at Alastor, panic shooting through his veins. "Well, we're just a little, er, preoccupied at the moment."

"Doing what?" There's a variety of scratching noises while Niffty moves about. "Never mind, the screw is loose!"

"The what - the screw? Wait, Niffty," everything's happening way too quickly, "wait, don't," Lucifer's voice crescendoes with red-hot alarm, "don't don't don't don't don't-"

Niffty plummets with a

smack!

on the bed, right beside them. They cough as a fine layer of dust snows over them, and Lucifer cleans it up with a snap of his fingers.

Which is a mistake, because now she can see exactly what the two of them are doing, and he's

- still lying on top of Alastor

- both of them in their pyjamas
- and there's absolutely no innocent reason to explain what the hell was happening

For some reason, Niffty looks absolutely outraged.

"Are you two having a sleepover?" She says accusingly. "WITHOUT ME?"

Alastor shoves Lucifer right off the bed - "OW!" - and he lands on the floor painfully. "Niffty, my dear. You misunderstand."

"Well, what's happening, then?"

Lucifer pops his head up, looking at the two of them. Alastor opens his mouth, and then closes it. Like he's unable to think of a good excuse.

"It is none of your concern." Alastor finally says.

"Oh, boo." Niffty sticks her tongue out. "You're being no fun, sir. I'm gonna tell on you to Charlie."

"Niffy! Uh…" Lucifer says frantically. "Don't do that. Why don't I bake you something, and we can alllll just forget this happened?"

"Are you trying to buy me off?" Niffty asks.

"Um. Maybe?"

"I *love* bribes!" She sounds far too delighted by this. "Ooh, but I want something else."

"Of course you do, Niffty." Alastor sighs at this. He's taking it rather well, all things considered. "What is it?"

She points to Lucifer's head. "I wanna sit on the king's shoulders. You always yank me off, Alastor. It's not fair!"

"Rejected." Alastor answers swiftly. "But you may ask for other things."

"Nuh-uh. I only want that."

There's a long staring contest between Niffty and Alastor, and Lucifer rolls in-between them nervously, trying to separate them on the bed. "Oh, I mean, it's ab-so-lute-ly fine with me! Just a small price to pay, right?"

"Yeah, Alastor." She pipes in. "Don't be so greedy!"

"Greedy?" Alastor's eyes bug out at this.

"Share him with me! You're already sleeping together."

Lucifer sputters, and he feels an increasing sense of mortification. "Please don't say that in front of other people."

“So, can I sit on the king’s shoulders?” Niffty ignores him and directs the question to Alastor, her eyes large and imploring. Alastor massages his temples, looking irritated, but then he drops his hand in resignation.

“I suppose there’s no arguing with you, or your twisted little mind.”

“Yeah!” She hugs Alastor’s head, squeezing him affectionately. “I *am* twisted!”

She starts cackling, and even though Lucifer’s known Niffty for a while, he still has no idea what's going on inside of her head. When they lock eyes, she lets go of Alastor and rifles through her pockets, pulling something out from them.

“I forgot to give this back to you, sir. Here you go.”

She pushes a cup into Lucifer’s hand. He holds the mug up to look at it, and after a quick scan, he realizes it’s the *Oh Deer!* cup.

“This! You own this now, right?” She says. “I borrowed it to scoop dirt from the garden.”

“Oh.” Lucifer gingerly places it on the table, and makes a mental note to deep clean it. “Thank… you?”

“You’re welcome!"

Alastor picks her up by the scruff of her neck. “As wonderful as it is seeing you tonight, Niffty, you should really be on your way. We’ll send you off with a portal.”

“Aw, that’s it?” She pouts. “Can’t I sleep over too?”

“No!” Alastor says brightly. He motions his head at Lucifer, who immediately conjures up a golden gateway. “Good night, my dear.”

Alastor flings her through the portal, and she soars through the air in a graceful arc. Once the portal spasms away, Lucifer looks at him sympathetically.

“That sucked, huh.”

“Bit of an understatement.”

“You think she’ll say something?”

Alastor taps his chin with his finger. “Niffty can behave rather… erratically. But I do think if you hold up your end of the bargain, she’ll remain quiet.”

They sit down across from each other on the bed, their knees brushing slightly against each other. Alastor pulls the red robe over Lucifer’s lap again, the silken material cool and smooth. Lucifer toys with the edge of the sleeve, and as he clutches it in his palms, a thought crosses his mind.

“Since Niffty found out about us, whose fault would it be, then? She just fell down on her own.”

Alastor fixes him with an unamused look.

“It is obviously yours.”

“What! How?”

“Because *you* asked me to bed you.”

He flushes a little; technically, yeah, he did ask him over for the night, but what the hell? “Why’d you have to say it like that-” Lucifer stammers, and then he jabs a finger at Alastor’s chest. “I mean, *you* accepted! So if anything, equal responsibility.”

Alastor lets out a scoff, before relenting. “Hmm. I’ll admit that there is a grain of truth to your words.”

Lucifer smiles smugly at this. “Looks like it’s not *entirely* your fault this time.”

“Aren’t you magnanimous.” Alastor says dryly. He gestures towards the bed, his hand sweeping towards the right. “Well! Shall we go sleep, then? It’s getting quite late.”

Lucifer feels a burst of nerves at the idea, but he just nods in agreement. This was the main event tonight, anyway. He shuffles in under the sheets, flopping down on the comfy mattress. After a moment, Alastor carefully pulls the blanket aside, and slides in beside him.

There’s a bit of a gap between them; Alastor clasps his hands together over his chest, lying perfectly still. In fact, he’s so motionless, it’s a little unsettling.

“Is that how you sleep?” Lucifer teases. “You’re like a rock. Or a statue.”

Alastor turns around to look at him, his smile twitching just a little.

“Why, how else am I supposed to sleep?”

“I dunno. Like this?” Lucifer sprawls his limbs out, and he smacks Alastor in the face. “Oh! Whoops.”

Alastor rubs his nose, and he glowers at him. “You clearly have a death wish.”

“It wasn’t on purpose!”

“I beg to differ.”

Lucifer rolls his eyes, and turns away from him. “Whatever. GOOD NIGHT.”

With a flick of his wrist, Lucifer shuts all the lights off. The room becomes completely dark, save for a sliver of ruby-coloured light, streaming in through a gap in his curtains. It’s a full moon tonight, and it makes the sky brighter than usual.

As he's about to drift into slumber, he feels something tug at his shirt; when he glances over, Alastor's hand is clasped gently onto his shoulder.

"You seem to have forgotten our deal." Alastor says quietly. Lucifer blinks at this.

"Which one?"

"All of them."

And Alastor pulls him into his arms.

Lucifer stiffens up initially from surprise, but then relaxes, tucking his head into the crook of Alastor's neck. He smells absolutely incredible; whatever shampoo he's using is really doing the trick. Lucifer grasps onto his black pyjamas, and after a second, Alastor runs his hand through his flaxen locks.

"How odd. I thought you would say 'not a deal,' but you appear to have let it slide."

"I'm too tired to argue with you over semantics." Lucifer mumbles. He tilts his face up to look at him, and Alastor's eyes are particularly bright in the darkness. "Speaking of deals, you didn't give me a compliment today."

Alastor chuckles a little, the sound fond. "And Niffty called *me* greedy."

"Well, she's not wrong."

"How reassuring that you have my back." Alastor says sarcastically. "Why don't you go first, then?"

"Me?" Lucifer ponders for a short while.

And then flashes him a wicked grin, knowing that Alastor would hate hearing this.

"You're caring."

Just as he expected, Alastor narrows his eyes at him. "Now, take that back."

"No."

"Take it *back."*

"No."

Alastor tightens his grip on his hair. "You are ruining my reputation, Lucifer."

"Does that really matter to you?"

Alastor looks caught off guard by his sentence, and doesn't reply. Instead, he continues to glide his fingers through Lucifer's hair, the movement particularly soothing against his scalp.

It’s so relaxing he almost nods off to sleep, until he feels Alastor’s fingers tap on his hair pins.

“These are familiar.” He murmurs.

Without a warning, Alastor tugs the pins out of his hair, and his blonde bangs fall into his eyes. His hair is incredibly unruly now, his wavy tresses curling this way and that, and he self-consciously tries to pat it down.

But Alastor grabs onto his wrist, his eyes appraising Lucifer carefully.

“I do enjoy when your hair is loose like this.”

Lucifer’s breath catches in his throat. “Yeah?”

“Yes.” Alastor lets go of him, and sets the pins aside. “But only show it to me.”

Oh, dear god. How can someone as menacing as Alastor be so damn endearing? He’s already turning away when Lucifer grabs onto Alastor’s chin, and he forces him to look back, his golden eyes staring into his red ones.

“You…” Lucifer shakes his head.

And presses a kiss onto Alastor’s lips.

He pulls away after only a second, and when he looks at him, Alastor’s astonishment is comically visible. His smile is frozen on his face, gaze flitting between Lucifer’s eyes and his mouth, and then-

Alastor grabs onto his shirt-

draws him close-

they’re only a hair’s breadth away from kissing again-

when Alastor reluctantly stops, pressing his forehead against his. His expression flickers between worry and indecision before his face shutters, and Lucifer can’t get a read on him anymore.

“Let’s call it a night.” He finally says.

“Getting sleepy?” Lucifer whispers.

“Indeed.”

Alastor’s lying, and they both know it.

But he strokes Lucifer’s cheek - so delicate it’s almost imperceptible - and they remain curled together, facing each other like two halves of a whole.

Chapter End Notes

There's a second Spanish translation of this fic btw! Here's the link, thank you!

As a reminder, there are 4 plots going on right now:
1. The Hotel acting as a rehabilitation centre (+ communicating with Heaven)
2. Team H.A.R.D + Plan O.D.D. trying to get Alastor and Lucifer together
3. Alastor and Lucifer navigating romantic intimacy
4. Revenge of the Vees

Fun Facts:
- Alastor's always been a little jealous of Niffty trying to climb on Lucifer, in (ch. 8 + ch. 13 + 27)
- Parallels Alastor tossing Niffty through a portal in (ch. 13)
- Parallels Alastor walking into his bookshelf in (ch. 16)
- The red bobby pins are a gift from Alastor in (ch. 15) and he helped arrange Lucifer's hair back then too!
- Alastor touched Lucifer's tail in (ch. 20)
- Niffty stole his cup in (ch. 31)
- Their wager about having their relationship getting discovered is from (ch. 33)
- The star sticker is from (ch. 33)
- Reminder that their deals are hugging whenever, daily compliments and daily kisses - they don't always do it, but they try to, lol

My QUESTION for you this chapter: who would be the big spoon/little spoon between Alastor and Lucifer? Please leave your opinions in the comments! See you next Friday <3

The Third Wheel

Chapter Notes

CH. 36 FANART:
- drawn by: @cotton-the-candy-dog
- drawn by: @sunset-sparkz
- drawn by: @dirtgrubber
- drawn by: @NoangelUser

THANK YOU!!! Find me on Tumblr: @morningstarwrites, Twitter: @morningstar_ao3, and Bluesky: @morningstarwrites

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Alastor is unable to doze off.

He turns to look at Lucifer, who doesn't seem to suffer from the same issue as him. He had fallen asleep the second his head hit the pillow; currently, Lucifer has his back towards him, and all he can see is his fluffy golden hair.

Alastor shuffles in a little closer, listening attentively to the sound of his steady breathing.

Inhale…

exhale.

Inhale…

exhale.

(A reassuring rhythm.)

It's quite something, to share a bed with another. He can't help but gravitate towards Lucifer's warm body, to try and get closer. Although, it's a bit inconvenient that he had chosen to sleep with his back towards him, and Alastor's seized with the urge to see his face.

Could I, perhaps, move him?

Alastor carefully places a hand on his shoulder, and tries to turn him over, to no avail. The action makes Lucifer stir a bit; he stops in place, not wanting to wake him.

Luckily, Lucifer swivels towards him instead, pulling the sheets closer to his body. Alastor perks up at his good fortune, and takes the opportunity to observe his peaceful appearance. He really is quite bewitching to gaze upon, his pale skin practically glowing underneath the

dim moonlight. He had assumed that Lucifer would have awful sleeping manners, but he's surprisingly still.

As though hearing his thoughts, he suddenly throws an arm over Alastor's torso.

He jumps a little at the contact, and peeks down at where they're touching. Lucifer's hand is resting across his chest, right over his black pyjamas; if he were awake, he would be able to feel the erratic beating of Alastor's heart.

It's merely a hand. Not a big deal, whatsoever-

And then Lucifer's leg hooks onto his waist, bringing him in closer. Before he can even react, Lucifer's arm moves up-up-up until he grips onto his red hair, pulling him into his embrace.

What in the world? Alastor thinks, mind spinning a little. Lucifer lets out a contented sigh, and he -

he -

he *nuzzles* him, his face gently pressing against his, and now Alastor's completely frozen, absolutely unsure what to do.

Is he pretending to sleep? He squints at him suspiciously, trying to detect any signs of consciousness. Lucifer's eyes are closed, his breathing still uniform. So he *is* resting, then. Just a tad clingy, when he's slumbering.

Lucifer's bangs slowly fall into his closed eyelids, and Alastor absentmindedly brushes it back with his hand, sweeping it out of the way. He only touched him lightly, but it makes Lucifer's eyes flutter open - they're so close he can see his reflection within his shocked golden eyes -

"AH-" Lucifer opens his mouth to scream, but Alastor quickly shoves his palm over his mouth.

"Do you wish to wake everyone?" He hisses. Lucifer shakes his head vigorously; when he's certain he won't yell anymore, he slowly retracts his hand.

"You scared me!" Lucifer whispers heatedly. "Were you just staring at me in my sleep?!"

Alastor deliberates for a second, and decides to own up to it. "You looked rather tranquil. I was astounded! You're usually so loud and foul-mouthed."

"Oh, you're in for it now-" Lucifer raises his voice, and Alastor presses a finger to his lips, silencing him once again.

"Shh."

They stare at each other wordlessly. Eventually, Lucifer grabs onto his wrist, and gently pulls his hand away.

“Can’t sleep?” He asks, voice hushed.

“Not particularly.”

“I can’t, either.”

Alastor lifts up an eyebrow. “Such a liar. You fell asleep instantly.”

“Yeah, but *someone* woke me up, so I’m not tired anymore.” Lucifer nudges him good-naturedly. They’re still impossibly close to one another, neither of them wanting to move. “Wanna talk?”

“Oh? And what is the topic of discussion?”

"Well... There’s something I’ve been wondering about.”

“Do tell.”

In lieu of responding, Lucifer waves a hand at the window, his magic drawing the curtains ajar. The red moonlight completely streams in, bathing everything in a pink hue; after some time, he finally speaks.

“It’s, uh, kind of a weird question.”

“A ‘weird’ question?” Alastor repeats. “Well! You have piqued my interest even more, now.”

Lucifer tightens his grip on the sheets, and glances at him unsurely. He takes such a long pause that Alastor’s almost certain he’s changed his mind. What sort of query could it be that makes him struggle so?

Lucifer clears his throat, and loosens his hold on the blanket.

“You once said that I smell like temptation.” He says slowly. “But what does that even mean?

Ah.

That compliment.

He had mentioned it ages ago, back at Mimzy’s Club, because it had been so very noticeable the first time they met. Alastor ruminates over how to describe it.

“It is hard to put into words.”

“You?” Lucifer says, surprised. “Mr. Slick Talker?”

Alastor looks at him with thinly-veiled annoyance. “I am assuming it’s different for every person. Our vices differ, after all. For me…”

Alastor leans in, and takes a deep inhale. His scent is so very heady - intoxicating - perfect - he places his head down onto Lucifer’s pillow when he’s done, the two of them sharing one, and now there’s only a microscopic distance between their faces.

“I remember all my good memories.” He says quietly. “And being near you makes me yearn for them even more. It’s quite addicting.”

He pauses for a second.

“And very irritating.”

“What?” Lucifer sounds confused. “Why?”

“Do you recall our first meeting at the hotel?”

“When you ruined my song?” He smiles wryly. “Yeah, I’d say that was pretty unforgettable.”

Alastor tut-tuts at this. “I merely *improved* upon it. If anything, Mimzy was the one who intruded at the end.”

“You *both* cut in!”

Alastor flicks his forehead, causing him to yelp. “You should really remain quiet. I am trying to answer your question!”

“You have a funny way of doing it, then.” Lucifer mutters, but he does pipe down, waiting for him to speak. Alastor looks at him unblinkingly; for some reason, it’s not so hard to admit what he was thinking at the time.

He shakes his head, not wanting to dwell on why it’s easier now. Lucifer focuses on him with rapt attention, and his eyes shine under the moonlight.

“Those memories came hurtling back once you stepped foot into the hotel.” He says at last. “And I was astounded I had forgotten them in the first place. It was entirely upsetting that you were the reason why they came back. Add to the fact how aggravating and rowdy you were-”

“Thanks,” Lucifer interjects sarcastically,

“-I really wanted to put you in your place.” Alastor finishes. “But your presence… your scent… it was all so very magnetic. I confess that it stirred some curiosity within me.”

He shrugs. “Hence, temptation. Or at least, my interpretation of it. Perhaps if you asked someone else, they will experience it differently.”

Lucifer looks contemplative. “Oh, wow. Okay. It’s not really what I expected.”

“What were you expecting?”

“I dunno. Apples?”

Alastor lets out a snort, a little amused. “How simpleminded.”

“Jerk.” Lucifer doesn’t seem offended, though. He props himself up on his elbows, and places his chin in his hand. “Since you answered my question, did you have anything you wanted to ask me?”

“Oh? Is his royal highness granting me permission to speak?” Alastor says snidely. “What an occasion!”

Lucifer glares at him. “Then never mind, asshole-“

“No take-backs.” He says quickly. “Because I do have something that requires clarification.”

“You do?”

Alastor hesitates. It is a bit of a… tender subject. Lucifer may side-step the question altogether, potentially ice him out, and he doesn’t want to wreck the warm mood of the witching hour.

And then Lucifer flicks his forehead, mirroring what he did to him just a few minutes ago.

“You’re thinking so hard, I can see the steam coming out from your ears.” Lucifer teases. He has an easy smile on his face, so charming and amiable it makes Alastor’s heart stutter.

He places a hand over his own chest, feeling retroactively embarrassed. But the sight of Lucifer does ease him a bit, and he says:

“Regarding Lilith. I suppose you miss her.”

Alastor doesn’t expand on it, but they both understand his implication. Lucifer seems a little surprised by the question - as he had expected - but there’s no trace of anger. Instead, he lets out a pensive hum, taking some time to mull it over.

“She’s been a part of my life for so long.” He finally says. “The thing with Lilith is… our relationship had extreme highs, and extreme lows as well. When it was good, it was absolutely incredible. It felt like I was flying, even when my feet were on the ground.”

He lies back down; his smile had slipped away, and his eyes look a little glassy. “But some of the worst days of my life were also with her, and it made me more miserable than I ever could have imagined. When she left, it hurt me so much. You know that part, though. I couldn’t sleep. I’d always play music instead. You met me in the music room once, remember?”

“Of course I remember.” Alastor says quietly. He had dropped by when he heard noise coming from downstairs. Seeing the small back of Lucifer, hunched over in despair, with a fiddle in his hands… it had been a strangely humanizing experience.

“She’ll always have her mark on me, but… I’ve never been happier to move on.”

And he looks at Alastor resolutely, his eyes full of warmth.

“I like *you.”* Lucifer says quietly. “So, so much.”

He offers his hand out to Alastor, and he immediately accepts, intertwining their fingers together. He has some trouble forming a sentence, his thoughts orbiting around and around.

“I don’t understand why you do.” He says eventually. “Perhaps we had good rapport, some common interests. But I don’t believe I was particularly kind, or generous. And I am certainly not amorous.”

Lucifer looks at him, wide-eyed. “Are you feeling insecure?”

He bristles at the comment initially - and then lets out a defeated sigh. Lucifer had, unfortunately, hit the nail on the head.

“I suppose that is one way to put it.” Alastor tightens his grip on his hand. “But if you dare tell anyone, I will make sure you regret it.”

“You know I wouldn’t.” He says, not taking his threat seriously. “Well, that’s easy to answer. I like you because of many things - I mean, you’re clever, you’re determined, you’re amazingly fun…”

and then Lucifer lowers his voice. practically a whisper in the wind.

“You make me feel alive.”

He smiles uncertainly, hand still clutching onto Alastor’s.

“Oh, boy. That was like, four compliments right there. Guess we don’t need to exchange them for a while.”

Alastor doesn’t reply at first, gobsmacked by his honesty. It reminds him of every other instance Lucifer had spoken to him sincerely, his kindness a beacon of light in the dark underbelly of Hell.

He’s not - *used* to it,

he doesn’t - *need* it,

and yet…

Alastor speaks desperately, his words coming out in ragged bursts-

“I - Lucifer, I am not a good person. You are aware that - I’ve, I’ve killed, I’ve manipulated, I’ve deceived-”

-and he doesn’t even know why he wants to tell Lucifer to stop, *stop it right now before it’s too late, too late for me to turn away from you, and-*

“So have I.” Lucifer says it so simply, so matter-of-fact, like none of that matters. “What now?”

And that simple sentence causes Alastor to face himself in the internal chasms of his mind, and finally acknowledge the truth:

that he's so far gone for Lucifer, there really *is* no turning back. Alastor stares at him, his gaze unwavering, his mind finally lacking any doubt whatsoever.

"I suppose it's good that we found each other, then. As I am quite fond of you as well."

It all slips out of his mouth effortlessly. No overthinking, no headaches, no worrying. A wave of calm washes over him, and Alastor just watches as Lucifer puts a hand over his own eyes, his face blushing brilliantly.

"Ohhhhhhh." Lucifer groans. "Oh, no."

"What is it?"

"I really wanna kiss you." Lucifer says, peeking at him through his fingers. "You're so - do you know what you *do* to me?"

"The feeling is mutual."

And Alastor pulls him in by his shirt, swooping down to kiss him hungrily. He clutches his white hoodie - feels Lucifer's bare legs intertwine with his - the softness of his lips - the way his fingers card though Alastor's hair and

he feels his emotions twisting, spiralling

more, and more, and more

out-of-control by the

second.

(but somehow, Alastor's rather enjoying it now.)

The sun rises,

the evening slips into day,

and Lucifer wakes up entangled within Alastor's long limbs.

How'd this even happen? He thinks, feeling a little confused. In the middle of the night, Alastor had managed to scoop him into his arms, tucking Lucifer perfectly against his chest. He peeks over, not wanting to wake him up, but still desiring to see him.

Alastor has a serene expression on his face, and he's smiling ever so slightly. It's different from his usual ever-present grin, and Lucifer admires it for a moment.

It's still rather early in the morning, and he'd prefer to sleep with Alastor, as opposed to get ready for the day. So Lucifer closes his eyes and drifts back into slumber, snuggling deeper into his embrace.

The next time he wakes up, Alastor's gone. In his place is a note, placed right on top of his red silk robe, and it reads:

You move too much in your sleep, Lucifer.

He promptly crushes it in his hands, feeling rather ticked off. "Why, that fucking…"

Well, whatever. Lucifer gets out of bed, folds Alastor's red robe neatly, and arranges it with the rest of his items. His Alastor Altar™ is so big, he probably needs to get a second desk for him now.

He stares at Alastor's objects, feeling a little dazed by the activities of last night. There had been a startling clarity to his crimson eyes, a sort of determination to his kiss. Lucifer's always been entranced by his inexplicable actions, but it's all he can think about in the light of day.

I wonder what he's thinking about?

His phone rings, cutting into his thoughts, and the screen lights up with the words **DAUGHTER! Calling.**

He automatically answers it. "Morning, sweetie."

"Dad, hey! Could you come down to the parlour? We just have some things to do before the par-tyyyyyyy!"

"Of course!" He pauses for a second. "Who's, uh, there right now?"

"You know. Everyone! Why?"

"Just - curious." He says quickly. "Be there in a second!"

He hangs up, and looks at himself in the mirror. Runs a hand through his fluffy hair, and then thinks about Alastor saying,

"I do enjoy when your hair is loose like this. But only show it to me."

He hurriedly gels it back, and places his hat on top. Voilà.

"O-KAY! I have a sign-up sheet here for all the chores we need to complete." Charlie says, sounding rather chipper. "I don't want to force you, so write down your name beside whatever you want to handle!"

"Yay, cleaning!" Niffty says cheerfully. She's currently sitting on Lucifer's shoulder, her hand gripping onto the brim of his hat. Alastor looks at her rather spitefully; as though sensing his stare, she turns around, and they lock gazes.

But then she shoots him the smuggest smile in the whole world, and Alastor has the unusual urge to wring her neck.

“C’mon, sir. Write our names down to sweep the floors.” Niffty tugs at Lucifer’s hair, and he dutifully signs on the dotted line, **LUCIFER AND NIFFTY.**

She’s really taking advantage of her bribe, Alastor thinks bitterly. He looks at Lucifer’s name on the page, and signs his name beside theirs with a flourish, **LUCIFER AND NIFFTY *and Alastor.***

“You’re joining us today?” Lucifer sounds a little surprised.

“Unfortunately, If I don’t oversee you, you’ll struggle to complete your tasks.” Alastor jeers. Lucifer rolls his eyes, but there’s a small smile tugging at his lips.

After everyone picks out their chores, Charlie inspects the sign-up sheet. When her eyes land on their names, she turns to look at them strangely.

“Oh! So dad, Alastor, and Niffty… you three will be working together, huh?”

“Yeah!” Niffty pats Lucifer’s face a few times. “But only ‘cause Alastor’s third-wheeling us.”

She sends him a shit-eating grin, and his irritation goes through the roof.

“HILARIOUS! *You* are the-” Alastor halts his sentence immediately, but the damage is done. Angel Dust snaps his head up, and, like a vulture circling his prey, he dives in.

“Wanna finish that sentence, Smiles?”

“Why, it’s finished.” Alastor says tersely. Angel Dust lets out an exasperated groan; he runs one hand through his hair, and another pointing at Alastor and Lucifer.

“Okay, I’ve had enough of this.” He says hotly. “You two like each other, right?”

Alastor and Lucifer freeze up at this, but Niffty replies on their behalf.

“They do!”

“I KNEW IT!” Angel Dust says triumphantly, pumping a fist in the air. Before Alastor can fabricate an excuse, Lucifer comes to the rescue.

(Just like at the masquerade ball.)

“What Niffty means is, uh… we’re best buds!” He grabs Alastor by the arm, tugging him to his side. It’s a friendly gesture, and Lucifer makes sure to keep some space between them. “So of course we like each other. Right, buddy? Who’s my number one pal?”

And then Lucifer slaps his back so hard he doubles over. His strength is really shocking at times, and Alastor feels vaguely like he got the wind knocked out of him. He’s a little

stunned by his declaration, but…

I do enjoy being his first choice.

After Alastor catches his breath, he slowly gives an affirmative nod.

“Hmm. I suppose… I would consider him to be my favourite, as well.”

Lucifer’s eyes widen,

Charlie tears up a little,

Angel Dust gapes at them,

and Niffty looks utterly insulted.

“What about me!” She protests. “I thought I was your favourite!”

“You have been unseated, Niffty.” Alastor sends her a scathing look. “You are well aware of the atrocities you’ve committed.”

Charlie dashes forward to sweep them all up into a hug. Angel Dust is tucked beside Charlie, Alastor is almost pressed up against Lucifer - except Niffty is very much in the way, right in-between them. He sends her a glower, and she just smiles sweetly in response.

“Oh, dad, Alastor.” She says tearfully. “That is the loveliest thing I have ever heard. You two have really come a long way!”

“I guess we have.” Lucifer acknowledges.

“Good thing I told you to get along, right?” Charlie’s eyes sparkle.

And, Alastor is loathe to admit it, but…

Yes.

Lucifer ends up carrying Niffty for the rest of the day. She’s tiny, so it’s easy enough to take her around as they complete their tasks.

The thing is, Alastor's *also* with them, and he's been entirely unhelpful. He's busy glaring daggers at Niffty instead of cleaning up, which is equal parts adorable, and mildly scary. In fact, he's simmering with so much rage Lucifer can practically feel it emanating off of his body.

When they're almost done cleaning, Alastor yanks her off by the nape of her neck.

"Are you quite finished?" He says brusquely. He sets her onto the ground, and she sticks her tongue out to blow a raspberry at him,

thbpttttttt.

"Alastor, you meanie!"

"I believe we have indulged you long enough, Niffty." Alastor narrows his eyes. "And besides, you were very much stirring the pot earlier."

"I didn't say what you two were *up* to. I just said that you LIKE each other." Niffty snickers. "Which you do!"

"Move along, dear." Alastor pushes her away with his radio cane, and she does skitter away, but not without sending an even louder raspberry,

THBPTTTTTT.

Lucifer can't help but chuckle at her antics. "She's kinda weird, isn't she? What's even going through her head?"

"Oh, you really don't want to know." Alastor lets out a sigh. "I have known her for quite some time, and even I have trouble predicting what she will do next."

"At least she wasn't all that heavy."

Alastor glances at Lucifer's shoulder, and his deer ears flatten. "Not even after all those hours?"

"Nah. I can handle it."

"Is that so."

Alastor takes a step closer. Places his hand on Lucifer's shoulder. And then he brushes at it with his red fingers, like he's trying to wipe dirt away from his white jacket. It's a little perplexing at first, but then he comes to a realization.

Is he trying to remove traces of her from my shoulder? He thinks, amused. *She really got on his nerves, huh.*

Once he's satisfied with his handiwork, Alastor puts his arm back down. "Now. What is next on your list of chores?"

“Oh. Uh…” Lucifer thinks for a moment. “Charlie wanted us to dust the lights up there.”

He points at the chandelier, which is a little too tall for either of them to reach. There are many solutions - he could fly up a few centimetres, or Alastor could grow bigger; even getting on his tiptoes would work. But he thinks about how antsy Alastor had acted during the whole day, watching Niffty on his shoulders, and he comes up with a better idea.

“I’ll carry you.” Lucifer offers, and Alastor blinks in confusion.

“For what purpose?”

“So that you can reach the chandelier, and dust it.” He conjures up a feather duster, and passes it to Alastor. “Since you didn’t help out *at all,* it’s the least you can do.”

Alastor accepts the feather duster wordlessly. He turns it over this way and that, and his gaze flicks towards Lucifer’s shoulders. He’s not sure if Alastor will accept - there’s other people in the hotel right now, after all - but they did have a public proclamation of friendship, so this kind of stuff is probably fine, right?

Just two buddies, buddying around, buddied up in a buddying fashion…

“I don't believe you can carry me.” Alastor finally says. Lucifer grins at this - he’s not saying no, that’s for sure - and he kneels down, presenting his back towards Alastor.

“Get on! I’ll piggyback you, *friend.”*

He drags out the last word in a teasing fashion, and he can feel Alastor placing a careful hand on his shoulder.

“I seem to recall that I was your *best* friend?”

Lucifer wheezes at this. It was the first thing that sprung to his mind, when Niffty had said that they liked each other.

(It’s true, though. Alastor really is…)

“Well, I mean.” He takes a deep breath. “Yeah. You are.”

His words are met with silence.

And then he feels Alastor climb on, one leg hooked on either side of his waist. He wraps his arms tentatively around Lucifer’s shoulders, and Alastor’s breath ghosts over his ear when he says:

“You are also my preferred person.”

Lucifer almost drops him. Alastor lets out a little growl, before tightening his hold on his shoulders.

“Are you struggling to lift me? Such a pathetic display from the King of Hell!”

“Oh, shut up.” Lucifer grumbles. "One sec. Let me readjust."

He hoists Alastor up, making it so that he's sitting on Lucifer's shoulders instead. Alastor lets out an uncharacteristic squeak, grabbing onto his top hat to balance himself, and his toned thighs press against Lucifer's face.

"You... are carrying me on your shoulders?" Alastor sounds utterly bewildered, but he doesn't try to get off, at least. All he does is tighten his grip on Lucifer's hat. He’s not all that heavy, despite his staggering height, and Lucifer takes a few cautious steps with him in tow.

“How’s that feel?”

“Rather foolish.” Alastor mutters. But he relaxes his grip, his thighs no longer crushing Lucifer's cheeks to oblivion, and so he carries him all the way to the chandelier. Once they’re directly underneath the light fixture, Lucifer says,

“Go sweep it.”

“Are you giving me an order?”

“Yeah. You’re always ordering *me* around.” Lucifer looks over his shoulder. “How does it feel, having the tables turned on you?”

Alastor scoffs, but he dutifully brushes the chandelier with his feather duster.

Charlie inspects the interior of the hotel, and she’s absolutely pleased with how clean it looks. Everyone really pitched in - even her hotel guests! - and she couldn’t be any happier.

“Thank you for your wonderful work! I just have one last, teensy detail before we all break for the evening.”

“You ain’t askin’ me to do more stuff, right?” Angel Dust leans against Husk for support, and he looks visibly fatigued. “Remind me never to volunteer for this type of thing ever again.”

“No, Angel. This one is actually for our facility manager!” Charlie directs her attention to Alastor. “Were you able to make us some outfits?”

“But of course.”

With a snap of his fingers, Alastor produces a rolling garment rack, hung with a variety of flashy dresses and pinstriped suits. Charlie sifts through the clothes until she finds a beaded dress that has the name-tag **CHARLIE** on it, and she looks at it with surprise.

“Is this… a flapper dress?”

“Why, yes.” Alastor lifts an eyebrow. “I much prefer the fashion from the 1920’s. Is that an issue?”

“No, of course not. They’re beautiful!” Charlie says hurriedly. “I don’t usually wear dresses, but I really like this one. Thanks, Alastor!”

As the rest of the hotel residents crowd around the rack to see their clothes, Alastor steps aside, hanging back near the fireplace. Charlie notes that he only made outfits for the core staff, and one of her guests - the male model - seems a bit miffed by this.

So miffed, in fact, that he makes a beeline towards Alastor.

“Hey, hot stuff.” The demon says. “You didn’t make any for me?”

“It is *only* for the employees here.” Alastor narrows his eyes at him, clearly displeased. “And I’d advise against calling me by that moniker.”

He doesn’t seem bothered by Alastor’s attempts to rebuff him, and Charlie’s a little concerned for his sanity at this point.

“Man, that sucks. Can you make one for me, anyway?”

“No.” Alastor looks like his patience is wearing thin, and the sinner groans at this.

“Aw, c’mon!”

He suddenly grabs onto Alastor’s arm, hand clasping on his bicep, and Alastor’s shadow surges out from his back. He looks so repulsed by the physical contact his face takes on a deathlike pallor, and alarm bells set off in Charlie’s head.

Oh, SHIT!

She dashes over, trying to prevent the inevitable bloodshed, but-

Lucifer beats her to it, smacking the sinner’s hand away with his apple cane. He’s standing right in-between the two of them, poised in front of Alastor, and his expression is uncharacteristically stern.

“He said no.” Lucifer sounds so cold, the air around them virtually lowers in temperature. “Move on.”

The model looks taken-aback, but he does slink away in a huff, muttering under his breath. As she gets closer to them, she starts to pick up more on their conversation.

"…are you play-acting as the knight in shining armour?" Alastor says mockingly. "Not very convincing, coming from someone as tiny as *you."*

"Uh, you're welcome, asshole." Lucifer sticks his middle finger up at him. "Geez, what do I have to do to get a 'thank you' from you?"

"Oh? Did you want praise?" Without a warning, Alastor yanks Lucifer's top hat off, and there's a malicious glint in his red eyes. "Well, why didn't you say so!"

Alastor ruffles his blonde hair with gusto, completely messing it up. When Lucifer throws an angry punch at him, he dodges it in one smooth motion.

"Looks like you missed."

"Give me back my fucking hat!"

"Try getting it yourself. Do I have to do everything around here?" Alastor taunts, and he puts the hat on his own head. It completely covers his deer ears, and he cackles vociferously at Lucifer's increasing agitation.

"You're in for it now, fucker!" Lucifer yells. They disappear into the distance, Alastor running, Lucifer chasing, and Charlie almost weeps at the whole scene.

They're so thoughtful towards each other. In their own, um, special way.

But that's what best friends are like, right?

… or not?

Charlie places her hand on her chin, pondering carefully. It's entirely possible for two people to be friends, and nothing else. She doesn't want to be too overbearing about all of this. Regardless of what her dad chooses to do, though, they really haven't discussed about him dating.

Like, at all.

It's not a topic that normally comes up. Maybe he's been holding back on her behalf? But she's an adult now, and so is he.

I'll talk to him at the party, Charlie thinks.

Chapter End Notes

Happy EIGHT (8) months of OSAS!!!! There's a Russian translation of this fic now, thank you so much 🙏

Fun Facts:
- Lucifer's scent as temptation is from (ch. 8)
- Lucifer's insomnia over Lilith is from (ch. 3)
- Parallels the masquerade ball from (ch. 10 + 11), where Lucifer made up an excuse to protect Alastor
- That sinner demon also bugged Alastor in (ch. 32)
- Related to this, an angel grabbed Alastor in (ch. 18) and Lucifer slapped him away as well
- "Just two buddies, buddying around, buddied up in a buddying fashion…" parallels (ch. 9 + 12), I did the same sentence phrasing with "Pals" and "Friends." It'll come back in the future!
- Also I know Charlie wears pants, but I really wanted to see her in a flapper dress LOL

My QUESTION for you this chapter: what do you think Vox's plan is? Let me know in the comments! See you next Friday <3

The Party (Act 1)

Chapter Notes

CH. 37 FANART:
- comic by: @dirtgrubber
- comics by @myntesuniverse: pt 1 + pt 2

THANK YOU!! Find me on Tumblr, Twitter, and Bluesky

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Unfortunately, Alastor is running a little behind schedule.

He runs his fingers through his hair; it's not cooperating with him today, and he really needs to get it under control. The party has already commenced, and he can hear the music drifting through his closed doors.

"You're late."

Alastor whirls around at the voice, and he's met with the amused face of Lucifer. "HAH! Scared ya. Serves you right for always trying to ambush me."

"Oh, you are incapable of frightening me." Alastor says snidely, and Lucifer huffs at his response.

"Whatever. I'm here to pick you up, so let's get a move on."

"Are you acting as my personal escort? Such a privilege."

"You're too slow! I had to see what the hold-up was."

"Hmm? Were you concerned?"

Lucifer shifts his weight from one foot to the other, looking rather unsure. He takes his non-answer as confirmation, and Alastor lets out a sigh, although it's tinged with fondness.

"Why, it's nothing serious." He waves a hand at his red hair, his deer ears flicking in the air. "I am only dissatisfied with *this."*

"With - are you talking about your hair?" Lucifer blinks. "What's wrong with it?"

"It's rather unruly."

"Uh, no, it's not."

“Well! You really need to get your eyes checked.” Alastor tugs at a strand to demonstrate, and it bounces upwards when he lets go. “Perhaps I should just tie it back, and call it a day.”

“You’re gonna tie your hair?” Lucifer visibly lights up at the idea. “Why don’t you leave it to me? I can do it for you.”

He conjures up a hair ribbon in his grey hands, and Alastor mulls it over. It’s not the first time Lucifer’s suggested this, and he recalls the comforting sensation of him styling his hair, back when they danced the polka.

To have him fix his hair, yet again? It’s, admittedly, an enticing prospect.

“Be of service, then.” Alastor sits down on his chair, and he crosses his legs elegantly. “Tie it.”

“You and your high and mighty attitude.” Lucifer grumbles, but he does stand behind him, carding his fingers through his crimson locks. He’s careful but quick, his hands pulling his hair back with a ribbon; after a minute, he pats Alastor’s shoulders to indicate that he’s done.

“What d’you think?”

Alastor looks in the mirror, and his eyes widen at his reflection. It’s not a style that he usually does - his hair is half-up, half-down, with a few loose strands framing his face - but it’s quite flattering, and expertly arranged.

“Hmm.” Alastor pretends to ponder about it. “Not bad.”

“Not *bad,* my ass!” Lucifer glowers. “You look handsome as hell like this.”

They both stiffen up at his compliment, mirroring each other’s surprise. And then Alastor lets out a low chuckle, suppressing it with his hand.

“Is that how you feel?”

Lucifer looks away, his face flushing. *“What-do-you-think.”*

It’s rather endearing, the way Lucifer drops compliments without a second thought. Alastor stands up from his chair, turning around to face him, and he studies his figure. He’s wearing the pink-and-white pinstriped suit Alastor had made for him, and he even has the matching hat on his head.

Such a delightful sight.

He can’t help but feel a bit pleased by his own handiwork. He had purposefully designed it so that they would match, albeit he’s dressed in red and black. Alastor runs a hand down the front of Lucifer’s suit, feeling his slim physique under his palm.

“This complements you well.”

He pauses moving right at Lucifer's chest, enjoying how quickly his heart flutters, the movement as fast as a hummingbird's wings. Alastor lifts his arm to grasp onto his tie, clutching it tightly with his fingers.

"But you didn't tie this properly."

He yanks Lucifer in by his necktie, bringing them face-to-face. He can hear Lucifer gulp, and he leans in close, their lips only millimetres apart. His face is a little expectant, like he's waiting for a kiss, and Alastor's suddenly struck with the urge to tease him.

"I'll show you what a *proper* Windsor knot looks like."

Alastor slips the tie off of his neck, and pulls the silk tie taut. He arranges it neatly against Lucifer's collared shirt, trying to get the ideal length, and Alastor can see his look of bewilderment in the corner of his eye.

"What the…" Lucifer gulps when he slides the tie into the perfect position, his red fingers touching the column of his pale throat. Once it's securely in place, Alastor takes a step back.

"There. Much better! I have, once again, saved you from being a laughingstock."

"You piece of…" He glares, and then waves him off. "Whatever. You ready to go?"

"But of course."

Lucifer makes a portal, and it ripples in the air invitingly, displaying an empty hallway on the other side. After a moment, he offers a hand out to Alastor.

"I'll help you through, old man. You'll probably trip if you don't have your cane."

"Such big talk. Don't you use a cane as well?"

But Alastor accepts it anyway, and he squeezes Lucifer's hand comfortingly.

The party's already in full swing when Charlie finally catches sight of the Vees. They're clearly dressed to impress, and they look rather intimidating as a group.

“Vaggie, come with me.” Charlie insists, pulling her by her arm. “I don’t want to say hi by myself.”

“To the Vees?” Vaggie furrows her eyebrows. “Charlie, if you don’t want to talk to them, then don’t.”

“But it’s their party! As the hotel hostess, I should at least greet them once.” Charlie smiles at her winningly. “And as my date, you should come with me. You look wonderful, by the way! I love you in that dress!”

Vaggie blushes a little at the compliment, and she adjusts her headband. “Thanks, hon. So do you. I really don’t like Alastor, but when you give him a task, he does it well.”

“It’s nice, right?” Charlie does a twirl, and her flapper dress sparkles underneath the light. “Okay, let’s go!”

They link arms, and together they walk over to the Vees, their heels clicking with every step. She makes eye contact with Vox first, and she shoots him a polite smile.

“Hey! Welcome to your party!”

They send back a chorus of greetings:

“Hello, Princess.” from Vox,

“Princesa.” from Valentino,

“Your dresses… are these beads? Fringe? And… silk?” from Velvette. She doesn’t seem to be making fun - her tone is rather appreciative. “You know, it’s making a comeback this season. My collection has quite a few pieces like this. Where did you buy this?”

“Oh, these clothes are made by Alastor.” She gestures towards herself and Vaggie. “He also made everyone else’s outfits!”

“Which ones?” Valentino asks curiously. Charlie scans the room, trying to find her staff.

“Um, let’s see… oh!” She points at Angel Dust from across the room, and he’s holding Niffty in his arms, “that suit is made by him,” she gestures at Husk at the bar, “that one too,” and she finds Alastor and her dad in the corner of the room, “and those too.”

Huh, Charlie thinks. *Dad and Alastor kind of match today.*

She looks at them for a little while longer. They aren’t doing anything particularly interesting, merely chatting with one another, and then Alastor places a hand on Lucifer’s shoulder. They both cackle uproariously, like they’re part of some inside joke.

Vox follows her gaze, and scoffs when he sees the two of them. “How long have those idiots been dating?”

“What?” She’s a little thrown by his comment, but she hurriedly shakes her head. “They’re not together. They’re just friends!”

He lifts an eyebrow. “Is that what you think?”

His insinuation is making her a little uncomfortable. Sure, she really wanted to get Alastor and her dad together, but… it’s clear that if they were meant to be, it would have happened by now. Since they’re super good friends, she doesn’t want to make things awkward for them.

“Excuse me, I have to take care of something.” Charlie tugs at Vaggie, and the two of them start to walk away. “But enjoy the party!”

Once they’re far enough from the Vees, Charlie lowers her voice covertly. “Vaggie, I’m gonna go talk to my dad. Can you watch over the party on my behalf? The little Niffty demons are taking care of most things, but make sure there’s no fighting.”

“Of course.” Vaggie nods. “You can count on me.”

They exchange a quick kiss good-bye, and Charlie immediately heads over to her dad.

Tonight, she’s gonna clear the air with him.

Alastor’s uncharacteristically clingy today, his hand lightly resting on Lucifer’s shoulder.

Which is fantastic, actually. Although the physical contact looks deceptively friendly, Alastor digs his fingers into him every now and then, and the gentle pressure is ridiculously stimulating.

“Well, Lucifer.” He says. “Shall we circle the venue?”

Lucifer looks at his hand, before looking back at his face. “Yeah, ‘course.”

They’re just about to depart when he spies Charlie running towards them. She’s recognizable even from a distance, and she looks absolutely beautiful - her hair is up in a faux bob, secured in place by a glittery headband, and her dress swishes with every step she takes.

“Dad!”

“CHARLIE!” Lucifer pulls her into a hug the second she arrives. “You look incredible!”

“Thanks!” Her smile widens when she catches sight of Alastor. “Look at you two, in your matching *best friend* suits! Oh gosh, I really want to take a picture.”

Alastor fixes her with a look, and she immediately changes topics. “Never mind. But, um, dad, can we speak together for a moment? In private?”

“In private?” Lucifer furrows his brows, a little worried. “Yeah, whatever you need. Is something wrong?”

“Nothing is wroooooooong…” Charlie laughs a little unnaturally. “Just a quick little heart-to-heart. No big deal!”

He feels even more concerned now, but he nods anyway. “Sure. Let’s go.”

“One moment.” Alastor interjects. He summons up a small shadow creature, and plops it onto Lucifer’s shoulder. It’s bird-shaped today, and it chirps so cutely that Lucifer has to pet its head.

Alastor immediately smacks his hand away.

“As I mentioned before, do not pet them.”

“Hey!” Lucifer scowls, but he does retract his arm. “Why’re you giving it to me, then?”

“Treat it as your supervisor.”

And with that, Alastor heads towards the dance floor. Lucifer places the shadow being on the brim of his hat, and then turns to Charlie.

“So, where to?”

“How about my office?” She suggests. “That way, no one can overhear.”

She’s being weirdly cryptic, but he does follow behind her, and they meander through the crowd together. Once they make their way into the room, she shuts the door carefully and leans against it.

“Dad, I have something kind of… sensitive? To ask you?”

“Sure.” His mind races with potential ideas - *is she moving, getting married, adopting a hellhound?* - “What is it?”

“So…” She takes a deep breath, as though steadying herself. “I dropped by our old place when you were up in Heaven, and I saw that you took down all the photos of mom.”

Oh.

Lucifer crosses his arms uncomfortably. It's a statement, not a question. Truthfully, it's been a long time coming. They've avoided talking about Lilith for so long, but she was always inevitable, wasn't she?

"I did." He finally says. "Are you upset?"

"No! I mean, I get it." Charlie says quickly. "About mom, well… I think you and I have spent a long time waiting for her."

She paces nervously, and her shoes echo in the silence. "I didn't want to believe it at first, but she's gone. For good. I mean, she's never even sent so much as a text to me for the past few years. I think it's more than reasonable for you and I to move on. Which… kind of brings me to my main point."

She smiles at him kindly. "Dad, if you ever want to date someone else, feel free. Not that you need my permission - not at all! - but like, if you're concerned about telling me anything, don't be, okay? I'll support you!"

Her words are so thoughtful, so kind, that it stabs Lucifer right in the heart. He's made a lot of mistakes in his life, but Charlie definitely isn't one of them, and all he can do is pull her into a hug.

"Charlie." He says slowly. "Thank you."

She wraps her arms around his shoulders, patting his back comfortingly. "Oh, no need to thank me, dad. Just let me know if you ever find 'the one,' okay? I would love to meet them!"

And now he feels even worse.

"Yes, I - I will." Lucifer says, a little guilty. She beams at him, and he tries to smile back encouragingly, to no avail.

Maybe he should talk to Alastor about this.

"Alastor!"

“Mimzy?” Alastor looks up in surprise. She barrels over, pushing people aside with reckless abandon, and brings him into a tight hug. “Why, I didn’t expect to see you here tonight.”

“If there’s a party with drinkin’ and dancin’, you know I’ll be there.” She shimmies her shoulders to demonstrate, and Alastor chuckles at her antics. “Speaking of, care for a dance, dollface?”

Alastor listens to the music attentively. It’s a fast tempo tonight, suitable for an Argentine tango, and he nods in agreement. “Oh, Mimzy. You know I can’t say no to you.”

He extends a hand - she accepts - and they swing to the beat of the music. When he lifts her into the air, she lets out a shriek of delight.

“You’ve always been the best dance partner, Alastor.” Mimzy gushes. “Although, Lucifer was pretty good too!”

His eye twitches at her sentence. Mimzy and Lucifer *have* danced together, right inside of her jazz club. It hadn’t bothered him much at the time, but now…

“Hmm.” Alastor twirls her in place. “Wasn’t he struggling to dance the Charleston with you?”

“Maybe.” Mimzy shrugs. “But I liked his energy! Say, you think he’d be open to dancing with me again?”

“Am I not enough for you? Why, I’m wounded!” Alastor dips her, and she laughs at this.

“Alastor. You’ve got oodles of charm, and no one to share it with. You ever think about getting hitched with someone?”

He thinks about Lucifer - his mischievous smile, his sparkling eyes - and he freezes up for a second, causing them both to miss a step.

“Hey!” Mimzy complains. Her voice forces him back into action, and they smoothly catch up to the footwork.

“Oh, I’m rather occupied at the moment.” Alastor says tersely. “Working with that useless king is taking up all my energy, unfortunately.”

“Say it to my face, asshole.”

Mimzy and Alastor jolt at this; when he turns around, he’s met with Lucifer’s wry grin. The shadow being is still perched on his pinstriped hat, and it sends a small tweet sound at Alastor.

“Hey, Mimzy.” Lucifer waves, and she curtseys back. “Mind if I grab him?”

“Not at all! Are you two gonna dance, your highness?”

“Nah.” He looks at Alastor, before shaking his head. “He’s got some chores, so we’re gonna head out now.”

Lucifer’s lying. But Alastor can’t pinpoint the reason why, so he goes along with it. “Is that so? My job never ends, it seems.”

“Fine, whatever. But you two owe me a dance later!”

Mimzy ushers them out of the dancing circle, before grabbing a stranger as her dance partner. They watch her for a moment as she spins around and around, knocking into people while she sashays across the floor, and then Alastor gives Lucifer a sidelong glance.

Although, he’s pointedly avoiding his gaze.*

**How very suspicious.*

“I presume that there aren’t any chores for me.”

Lucifer starts at this, and then lifts his hands up, as if to surrender. “You caught me.”

“So what did you need me for?”

“I… well…” Lucifer looks at him, and then looks away. “Charlie, she…”

Admittedly, Alastor’s a little curious about their topic of conversation. He waits for a moment, but Lucifer looks like he’s struggling on how to phrase it.

“I’ll tell you later.” He says eventually, and Alastor narrows his eyes at him.

He’s acting peculiar, and exceedingly so.

(Distant.

Quiet.)

Lucifer’s brows are knitted together, revealing his troubled state. It must be quite a problem, and Alastor deliberates on how to make him feel better, if only for a moment.

“Do what you will.” He shrugs, acting as blasé as possible. “Besides, I have something else to bring up.”

“You do? What?”

“Are you up for a little competition?”

As he expected, Lucifer instantly perks up at the suggestion.

“Hell yeah. What’re you thinking of?”

Alastor points towards the bar, right where Husk is sitting. “Shall we see who is better at drinking?”

Lucifer's eyes widen, but then he shoots him a lopsided smile. "You sure about that? Didn't you lose last time? You couldn't even stand up straight."

"Well! As if *you* performed any better."

Lucifer bristles at his provocation, and Alastor almost laughs at this. He's always been so easy to rile up. "FINE! I'll show you. Winner gets a request?"

"Whatever else could it be?"

They both make a beeline towards the bar, the crowd parting for them as they walk. Husk's sipping away at his bourbon leisurely, but once he notices their arrival, he attempts to chug it down in one go.

"What's the rush, Husker?"

"I was *trying* to avoid you." Husk groans. "You here to make my life a living hell again?"

"Aren't you a jokester!" Alastor says cheerfully. "Just hand me a bottle of whiskey, and we will leave you be."

"I ain't working today." Even so, Husk hands over a bottle, which Lucifer accepts. "Now, quit talking to me."

"With pleasure."

Husk's rather ornery, but Alastor doesn't care enough to soothe him. He merely motions towards a secluded bar table, and they settle down around it - Lucifer sitting on the tall bar stool, Alastor standing. In the back of his head, he notes that they're the same height for once.

"Are we drinking it neat?" Lucifer asks, pouring the whiskey into two glasses. Alastor shakes his head; with a snap of his fingers, he materializes an outrageous number of maraschino cherries.

"Don't you require some sugar? You prefer your beverages disgustingly sweet, do you not?"

"It's not *disgusting,* it's delicious!" Lucifer protests. He slips a couple of cherries into his cup, downs the whiskey, and then smacks his lips appreciatively. "See? Mmm, mmm, mmm. Perfect!"

Alastor snorts, unable to stop his laughter from bubbling out. "Such idiocy."

Lucifer's grin widens, and he looks rather happy, despite the insult. Alastor polishes off his whiskey, and Lucifer waves his cup at him.

"Another."

"How demanding." He raises an eyebrow, but dutifully fills up both of their cups. They finish it in one go again, and Lucifer looks at him, his eyes crinkling up into a smile.

“You’re calling *me* demanding?”

“If the shoe fits.”

“Ha-ha-HA!” Lucifer cackles. “Well, I know your secret.”

At this, Alastor’s deer ears lift up. “My secret? Whatever could it be?”

“C’mere, and I’ll tell you.”

Lucifer beckons him closer with his finger, and it feels vaguely like a trap. Alastor dithers for a second, his eyes darting from left to right. No one else seems to be paying them any heed, and so he bends down,

tilts his head so that Lucifer can whisper into his ear,

“I’ve seen the way you react whenever I command you, *Al.* I know you like it.”

Alastor freezes up -

pinpricks of interest shooting through his body in a million directions at once -

his hand clenches his cup so tightly it

CRACKS!

under his grip, and he slowly drops the shards onto the table. He doesn’t even notice the pain, and he swivels his head to look right into Lucifer’s startled eyes.

“You really are… so tempting.” Alastor murmurs. The sound of the party fades into background noise, and it almost feels like they’re the only ones present. “Yet so foolish.”

He leans in, voice lowered so that only Lucifer can hear him:

“Keep it in your pants, *darling.”*

Lucifer jerks back and topples right off of his stool.

Husk is working through another glass of bourbon when Angel Dust and Niffty drop by the bar. They sidle into the chairs beside him, flanking him on either side, and Angel Dust impatiently gestures at Husk.

“Make me a drink.”

“What the fuck?” Husk says, outraged. “What part of ‘I ain’t working today’ don’t you guys get?!”

“Who else asked you?” Niffty says curiously. He slides her a glass of juice, and she sips it happily.

“Those two fuckers.” Husk jabs a thumb towards Lucifer and Alastor, and they all turn to look at them. For some reason, Lucifer’s sitting on the ground, coughing like he’s choking on his drink, and Alastor’s laughing so hard he’s practically in hysterics.

“Man, they should just fuck and get it over with already.” Angel Dust complains. Husk passes him the bottle of bourbon he’s been drinking from, and Angel Dust takes a giant swig. “Also, NIFF! You’re like, the most unhelpful person in the world. What the hell did you mean when you said they like each other?”

Niffty looks at him, and smiles mysteriously. “They’re just super close!”

That’s an understatement, Husk thinks. He still regrets the day he accidentally walked in on them holding hands, and he takes a large sip from his cup. Maybe if he drinks enough, he’ll finally forget it.

“Angel. What are you scheming?”

“Oh, I’m just gonna call it a night.” Angel Dust places his chin into his hand. “I’d rather drink with you, anyway.”

Husk grins at this, feeling rather pleased. “Do you, now? You savin’ room on your dance card for me?”

“Dance card? What am I, a Regency era maiden?” Angel Dust laughs, the sound airy and bright. “I’ll make room for you any day, baby.”

Husk looks at him carefully, and places his cup down onto the table. Truthfully, he doesn’t know how to feel about Angel Dust’s flirting. He’d be stupid to believe he was being sincere.

But maybe…

He could hope, just for tonight.

“How about a dance right now?”

Angel Dust pauses drinking, and places the bottle onto the counter. He studies Husk carefully, like he’s trying to deduce what his ulterior motives are.

But he doesn't have any. Angel Dust seems to pick up on that, and he sends Husk a small smile.

"Well, uh…" For once, he drops his over-exaggerated persona, looking a little shy instead. "Sure."

Alastor made a grave miscalculation.

He grips onto the table for balance, feeling his head swirl round and round and round and round and round and

r
o
u
n
d
….....?

"Lucifer." He speaks deliberately slow, trying to enunciate properly. "How many have we… had?"

"Six. No, seven?" Lucifer scrunches up his eyebrows, deep in thought. "Something like that?"

He sounds more lucid than he expected. Alastor places a hand on his head, trying to keep his world from spinning any further.

"You are quite good at holding… your liquor."

"Huuuuh, what?" Lucifer slurs.

Ah.

It appears that he's also having difficulty.

"Never you mind." Alastor manages to say. "How shall we determine the winner?"

Lucifer leans his head onto his hand. His eyes are fixed onto the elevator in the distance, which they had created especially for the party. Lucifer points at it, grinning at Alastor the whole time.

“Let’s say… whoever can make it to the elevator first, and press the highest floor number?”

“Doable.”

It’s not very far, but somehow, it’s the most strenuous task Alastor has had to face in a while. He’s having trouble walking in a straight line; luckily, Lucifer is as well, and they wobble into each other every now and then.

“Like I said. You can’t even stand up straight-” Lucifer bumps into a guest, and he quickly mouths, ‘sorry.’

“Don’t be ridiculous.” Alastor snaps, but he leans against the wall, trying to prevent himself from sprawling across the floor. He materializes his radio cane to keep him upright, which helps a bit, but not all that much.

It’s with some horror that he watches Lucifer touch the elevator doors first, and his triumphant smirk makes Alastor want to punch him.

“HAH!” He presses the button, and once it slides open, he saunters through the doors. After a moment, Alastor ventures in, but it’s too late - Lucifer’s already pressed the highest number.

“I’ve won today.” He sticks his tongue out. “Looks like the score’s 3 - 3.”

Alastor only registers his words after a few seconds, too busy focusing on the way his forked tip darts out invitingly. He rips his gaze away, forcing himself to look at Lucifer’s face instead.

“How irritating.”

The elevator doors slide shut, and it’s just the two of them, staring at each other. Lucifer leans against the railing, his head lolling back.

“What now?”

“You are the one who suggested coming in here. Don’t you… have a plan?” Alastor says mockingly.

“Just… get off the elevator once the doors open, douchebag.” Lucifer keeps his hand on the rail for balance, and Alastor follows suit, feeling the way the golden lift shoots upwards, going up floor by floor,

but the elevator

shudders to a

stop.

(And the doors don't open.)

"Uh, what?" Lucifer looks around. "What happened?"

Alastor touches the doors, and listens to it attentively. There's no sound whatsoever, and the elevator doesn't move at all. In conclusion…

"I believe that the elevator is broken." Alastor decides. "So we're stuck."

"WHAT?!"

Chapter End Notes

I got some comments asking if they had intercourse last chapter? Which kind of surprised me lol, no they did not.

Act 6 (ch. 33 - 36) is Party Prep/Learning Intimacy! We're in Act 7 now, The Vee's Party / Not-so-subtle Flirting. We're almost done OSAS btw! After this, there's two acts left, Heaven + some dates to wrap it up.

Fun Facts:
- Lucifer tied Alastor's hair in (ch. 13)
- Alastor's shadow minions appear in (ch. 3, 12, 18, 20)
- Charlie finds out about Lucifer removing Lilith's photos in (ch. 24)
- They danced at Mimzy's club in (ch. 7)
- They drank together in (ch. 15 + 16)
- Alastor likes being ordered around in (ch. 23 + 27)
- Lucifer offered his hand to him for the portal in (ch. 12), Alastor offered it in (ch. 26)

My QUESTION for you this chapter: who will find out about Alastor and Lucifer's relationship next? See you on Friday!

The Party (Intermission)

Chapter Notes

CH. 38 FANART:
- comic by: @dirtgrubber
- drawn by: @huntedrose
- drawn by: @0-cloud-puff-0
- drawn by: @mrnicklower008
- I drew a little something (requested): Tumblr, Twitter, and Bluesky
- also a voice dub

Thank you always!! Find me on Tumblr, Twitter, and Bluesky

if you want to know what they're wearing at the party, I drew some outfit refs here: 1 + 2 + 3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Are you joking?" Lucifer asks incredulously. "What d'you mean it's *broken?"*

Alastor sends him a withering glare. "I am saying that the elevator is out of service. You are free to check, if you so wish."

He gestures at the elevator doors, and Lucifer places his palms on the cool steel, trying to detect any movement. It's unusually inactive, with nary a noise.

Oh well. This isn't an obstacle at all, because he's got a ton of ideas on how to leave.

"Watch and learn, idiot." Lucifer digs his fingers into the elevator doors, and attempts to wrench it apart with just his strength. That's typically enough, but today he's seeing double, his vision blurring like crazy.

"And what am I looking at here?" Alastor cuts in unhelpfully. "Are you practicing telekinesis?"

"I'm *trying* to get us outta here!" Lucifer yells back. "Fine. I'll make a portal."

He lifts up a hand, but the mere action sends his head spiralling even further, and he has to lean against the wall for support.

"Crap. I'm too drunk for this." He looks at Alastor from the corner of his eye. "Can you do your little, uh, shadow teleporting thing?"

"But of course. I am completely sober, after all."

Alastor takes a step forward, his face expectant.

But nothing happens.

“How peculiar.” He scrunches his eyebrows in concentration, taking another step-

and smacks right into the wall instead. Alastor snarls at the contact, and laughter spills out of Lucifer’s mouth.

“You’re fucking *wasted!”*

“As I mentioned, I have never experienced intoxication.” Despite his bravado, Alastor’s clinging onto the railing for dear life, and Lucifer keeps chuckling at the sight. “Did you have other ideas, or will you continue to be a nuisance?”

“You're calling *me* a nuisance? You can’t even handle standing up.”

Alastor removes his hand from the rail defiantly, trying to remain upright on his own. After only a second, he immediately grabs onto it again.

“What did I say!” Lucifer says vindictively. Alastor gnashes his teeth together, and he looks downright murderous.

“Go call Charlie.”

“If I could call her, I would have already. No cell phones allowed at this party, right?”

“Observe.” Alastor gestures towards the elevator panel. “The answer may be right in front of you.”

Lucifer follows where he’s pointing, and he hones in on the emergency call button. Oh. Duh. He presses it, and in an instant, Charlie picks up.

“Hello, guests! Is there something wrong?”

“Chaaaaaaaarlie.” Lucifer drawls. “It’s your papa!”

“Papa, what - this is… dad, right? Lucifer?”

He nods at first, but then he realizes that she can’t see him. “Yeah-yes-yep. See, the elevator isn’t working. Could you come get me?”

“Okay! No problem-” A crash happens in the background, and Charlie sounds a little frazzled. *“Oops. There’s some stuff I have to do right now, but I’ll fix it as soon as possible!”*

“No problem. I’ll be right here.” He hangs up, and gives Alastor a thumbs-up. “Problem solved!”

“I wouldn’t be so optimistic. She sounded quite preoccupied.”

“We got all the time in the world, right?”

Lucifer's hit with another wave of vertigo, and he slides down onto the ground. The world is more stable down here, and he pulls his legs into his chest, putting his head onto his knees to keep himself steady.

After a moment, he can hear Alastor walking over, his shoes clicking in the silence.

And then, surprisingly, he sits down as well.

He can feel Alastor's arm pressed up against his, and without even thinking about it, Lucifer leans on him.

His body is so warm…

solid…

comforting…

Selfishly, Lucifer can't help but be a little happy that it's just the two of them, trapped together. A moment of peace, all to themselves.

That's when something cold touches his leg. When he lifts his head up, he notices that it's a bottle of water, the ice cubes clinking within the vessel. (Presumably from Alastor?)

"Sober up, your majesty." He says, all but confirming. "You wouldn't want Charlie to see you in this state, do you?"

Alastor has his own bottle, and he places the container onto his lips, drinking his water down eagerly. The motion of his throat as he swallows is oddly entrancing. Kind of…

alluring…

Lucifer watches him, transfixed. When he's finally finished, Alastor looks over at him rather strangely.

"Is it fun to watch me drink?"

Uh-oh. Lucifer doesn't know how to respond without sounding like a creep, so he picks up the bottle from the floor instead. "Where'd you get this?"

Mercifully, Alastor lets it slide. "I may not be able to move using my shadow, but I can still summon material items. Drink up."

Lucifer does chug the water, finishing it in one go, and he feels a little more lucid with it in his system. They don't speak for a while, so Lucifer gazes up at the ceiling, watching as the elevator lights flicker above them.

It should be a little creepy - he ought be trying to get out, as fast as possible - but he finds that he enjoys hearing the sound of Alastor's gentle breathing, so reminiscent of when they slept together.

“Good party.” Lucifer finally says. “It’s funner than I expected, considering it’s, uh, for the Vees.”

“You really shouldn’t bother with them.” Alastor says dismissively. “But as parties go, I do agree that this is one of the better ones.”

There’s an unspoken, *because you’re here,* from the both of them.

Lucifer peeks at him from the corner of his eye, but Alastor’s already looking at his profile. His red eyes are a little hazy. Expression softer than usual. From the alcohol, maybe?

Either way, Lucifer feels compelled to slump up beside him, placing his head against Alastor’s shoulder. He doesn’t pull away or protest; all Alastor does is stretch his legs, crossing them at the ankle, and his large hands are neatly placed on his lap.

Wanna hold your hand, he thinks.

“Then by all means.” Alastor replies.

With a start, he realizes that he said it aloud. But Alastor lifts a hand out to him, he accepts it, and they interlace their fingers together. He glances down at their joined hands, one big, one small.

They’re not doing anything scandalous.

Yet Lucifer’s hyperaware of everything, the alcohol somehow intensifying rather than dulling the sensations. He tightens his grip on Alastor’s hand, his heartbeat too quick for his liking.

“So you’ve won.” Alastor sounds a little more clear-headed now. Less slurred. “What is your request?”

“Just stay here with me.” He mumbles out. “Don’t go.”

He probably could have used it for something better. At the moment, however, the only thing he really wants is to bottle this feeling up somehow, to remember it forever. But he can’t, so he chooses the next best thing.

Alastor looks down at him, his eyes glowing a brilliant crimson, even under the dim light.

“Oh, I have never planned on leaving you.”

Several minutes go by.

Several minutes where Lucifer still has his head on his shoulder.

Several minutes of their hands intertwined, the two of them waiting for the elevator to be fixed.

Truthfully, Alastor feels sober enough to travel through shadow now, but he doesn't have any desire to leave. So he just sits there, staring unabashedly at Lucifer. His skin is a little flushed, and he's removed his hat, setting it on the floor.

"So." Lucifer lifts his head, and looks at Alastor. His golden eyes are half-lidded, his long eyelashes casting shadows across his cheeks. "I have something kinda hard to bring up."

Alastor lifts an eyebrow. "Oh? Whatever could it be?"

Lucifer takes a deep breath, like he's steeling himself. He doesn't look all that comfortable, but he ends up speaking, anyway.

"I had a weird conversation with Charlie earlier. She mentioned that if I wanted to date, I should."

"Hmm." Alastor tut-tuts at this. "How did you respond?"

If he's being honest, he's not surprised that Charlie would say that. She's always been rather tenderhearted.

(And a smidge nosy.)

"I just thanked her, although…" He runs his free hand through his blonde hair, messing it up a little. "I know you don't want to tell anyone just yet, but I think I should let her know. About us, I mean. What do you think?"

His suggestion drapes over them like a heavy cloud, and Alastor stares at him, pondering about the ramifications. Their relationship may have been *accidentally* discovered by a few people, but to *intentionally* tell someone?

And that 'someone' being Lucifer's own daughter?

He's not… entirely opposed to the idea. Surprisingly.

They've been together for several weeks now, bordering on months, and he's finally acclimated to his burgeoning feelings. He could even, potentially, lay bare their not-so-secret relationship. Let the whole world know that they're involved together.

But sneaking around is much too fun to give up. Alastor thinks. *Not yet, at least.*

“Very well. We will inform her, and *only* her, that we are lovers.” He decides. “Shall we look for Charlie after our elevator predicament?”

Lucifer gawks at him, and he feels a little uncomfortable by his reaction.

“What is it?”

“It’s - well…” There’s a tinge of awe in Lucifer’s voice. “That’s the first time you called me your lover.”

Alastor swallows uncomfortably. He wishes that Lucifer didn’t notice it, didn’t point it out, because he’s not…

He feels a little wrong-footed, and all Alastor can do is shove him back - “HEY!” - his hand practically squishing Lucifer’s face.

“Well, you are. Unfortunately.”

“Uh, that last bit is unnecessary.” Lucifer says, annoyed. Somehow, being the recipient of his irritation makes him feel more at ease, and Alastor snickers at his reaction.

“Aren’t you unusual. You simply could have used your request, and then I would have no choice but to tell Charlie.”

“That…” He furrows his eyebrows. “Wow. It never actually crossed my mind.”

“Of course it didn’t. You really ought to exercise your brain more.”

“Oh, fuck off!” He says hotly. “Besides, I don’t want to force you or anything. You’re ready when you’re ready, right?”

It’s not as though Lucifer’s making a profound observation. He’s merely stating the obvious. *You’re ready when you’re ready.*

so why does he feel so

much?

like a glass of water, threatening to overflow?

Alastor retracts his hand, genuinely flabbergasted. He knows that Lucifer is ridiculously thoughtful. Overflowing with infinite grace. He may have mocked him the other day, calling him a knight in shining armour, but he really is so…

“Oh, actually.” Lucifer interrupts his thoughts. “You gave me a shadow creature - bird - minion-thing, *whatever,* and it was with me when I spoke to Charlie. It probably heard our conversation, right? Did it tell you already?”

Lucifer pats around his hat, as though he were looking for the shadow being. It had dematerialized sometime during the night, a side effect from Alastor’s heavy drinking.

“You have the wrong impression.” He says slowly.

“Of what?”

“Of those shadow beings. I can really only determine your location with them. That’s how I found you so quickly, up in Heaven.”

“Oh. Really?” Lucifer sounds surprised. “Is that all they do?”

“They also notify me telepathically if something occurs, but it’s more of a noise, rather than distinct words.” He taps his own head for emphasis. “So in short, no. I was not eavesdropping on your chat, if that was your concern.”

Lucifer snorts at this. “All you ever do is snoop around in the shadows. I wouldn’t be surprised if you were listening in.”

“I have much better things to do than follow *you* around, Lucifer.”

“Oh, you’re so full of shit! You had your shadow creature track where I went!”

“As I already stated, it was *supervising* you.”

“Yeah, yeah.” Lucifer pauses, and then he looks at Alastor curiously. “Speaking of. Why d’you hate it when I pet your little friends, anyway?”

Alastor crinkles his nose at the insinuation. “I would not refer to them as my ‘friends’.”

“Okay, then lackeys, underlings, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.” Lucifer waves it off. “You always stop me from petting them, even though they looooooove it.”

Alastor doesn’t respond immediately. It’s unbecoming for him to reveal the reason why, as it’s a little… ~~embarrassing~~

~~mortifying~~

never mind.

He can feel the oppressive weight of Lucifer’s curious stare, and - Alastor knows if he told him to back off, he would.

But do I want him to?

It’s a contradictory mix of emotions; a powerful yearning; he turns to look at Lucifer, needing to confess all his desires, confess all his sins, confess, confess, confess…

“Oh, you.” Alastor murmurs. “You have become quite the Achilles’ heel.”

“Huh?”

Alastor puts his finger on Lucifer's chin and tilts his face up, his eyes widening at the proximity. They're so close, his hair practically brushes against Lucifer's cheekbone.

"Initially, I felt like you were belittling them."

He leans in closer, and Lucifer's breath catches in his throat.

"But now…"

He says, sotto voce,

"You should only be touching *me."*

Their foreheads press against each other, just the lightest contact. Alastor's hand moves up to cradle his cheek, and Lucifer reaches for his tie, pulling him closer

and closer and

closer

until their lips graze against each other.

Lucifer is the first to move in, kissing him a little more forcefully, and Alastor experimentally swipes his tongue against him. Lucifer jolts a little at the contact, his face flushing.

"You-"

But Alastor interrupts him, taking advantage of his open mouth by deepening the kiss. He can feel Lucifer eagerly crawling into his lap, running his fingers through his red locks, and wherever they touch feels thrillingly electric.

"Do you taste good everywhere?" It slips out before he can think better of it. Lucifer tightens his grip on his hair, pulling a desperate noise from Alastor's lips, static and muffled.

"You don't like my blood, remember?"

"Ah, yes." Alastor is, frankly, a little breathless. "It really was quite horrid."

"Hey." Lucifer pulls back, vexation written all over his features. It makes him chortle, his laughter echoing within the lift.

"Such a pity. But I can always explore other areas." He licks a stripe up Lucifer's neck, and revels in how his body shudders, his gloved hands clutching Alastor even harder. "You really taste quite incredible."

"Praise me more." Lucifer mumbles, and Alastor takes in a sharp inhale of breath.

"So you like that?"

"Fucking *love* it." Lucifer growls, voice so low and guttural it lights fireworks under Alastor's skin, *kaboom-boom-BOOM-*

DING!

They jolt at the unexpected noise, and the elevator doors start to

slide

open,

the gap gets wider and wider and

“Oh SHIT!” Lucifer yells. Alastor scrambles to get away from him- but Lucifer head-butts him, *right* in the face- Alastor hisses at the impact-

“You will *regret that-”*

“I’ll heal you later!” He disentangles himself from Alastor and stands up, adjusting his clothes to look presentable. Once the elevator doors are fully opened, he smiles widely, acting as nonchalant as possible.

“CHARLIE! Thank you-”

and then stops abruptly. He peeks his head out of the lift in confusion. “What the… there’s no one out here.”

“Are you certain?”

“Well, I don’t see anyone. Do you?”

They step outside of the elevator together, swivelling their heads this way and that. Alastor doesn’t see anything amiss, so he lets out a shrug. “I suppose not.”

“I guess Charlie fixed it from the control room or something?” Lucifer suggests. “Let’s go look for her.”

“Hmm.” Alastor looks at the hallway a little longer, and then turns away. “Very well, then.”

“You two don’t usually want to talk to me at the same time.” Charlie comments. The three of them are standing in a circle within the music room, facing towards one another. “Is

something wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong!" Lucifer says quickly. "This is more of an FYI kinda thing? You know, just some info that *I* know, which I'm passing on to you, because now I'd like *you* to know. You know?"

"So, um…" Charlie puts her hand on her head. "Sorry, dad. You're confusing me."

Lucifer hesitates, because he's not sure how to bring this up to her. It's his first time doing something like this (RE: Introducing His Partner To His Daughter), and he has no idea what the protocol is.

"Charlie." He says delicately. "Remember how we talked about relationships?"

"Yeah?" She says, blithely unaware of his inner turmoil. He'll just have to get it over with, as fast as possible.

"I just… Yeah. I'm ready to, uh, move on."

"Move on - OH!" She visibly lights up, her smile so bright it could rival the sun. "OH-EM-GEE! Are you telling me because you want some help? I can set you up on a date!"

He gapes at her, unable to formulate a response. Alastor doesn't seem to suffer from the same issue, although he looks visibly on edge, thrusting his radio cane between her and Lucifer.

"That will be unnecessary." He says, tone icy. "Isn't that right, Lucifer?"

"What! Why? You don't trust me?" Charlie says, sounding a little sad. Lucifer shakes his head rapidly, wanting to remedy her wrong idea ASAP.

"It's not that I don't trust you, Charlie! It's because, well. *We* are…" He uses his hand to gesture between him and Alastor. Charlie watches them for a moment, her expression blank and uncomprehending.

But then she lets out a dramatic gasp.

"NO WAY! REALLY?! I - Wait." She lifts up a hand, her delight fading away in an instant. "Just making sure. You're dating *each other,* right?"

"We're together!" Lucifer elbows him. "C'mon, say something."

Alastor glances down at him, before letting out a sigh. "As unlikely as this may seem, he cast a little spell on me. And now we're here."

"You can sound a little more enthusiastic."

"Why, this is about as excited as I can possibly be."

"Oh, you fucking-"

“Aw, you two!” Charlie swoons, breaking up their argument. “I knew you had chemistry! I am so, so, SOOOO happy for you guys!”

“Thanks, sweetie.” Lucifer smiles at her, relieved. He couldn’t have asked for a better reaction - although, he’s not that surprised at the outcome. She’s always been their number one supporter, even back when he and Alastor were enemies.

“Okay, let me update everyone, and we can host some kind of party!” She says, her eyes shiny and bright. “Oh, wait, we’re already having a party right now. Maybe some other celebration, then? Or-”

“Charlie!” Lucifer cuts in hastily. “Actually, we’re trying to keep it a secret, so please don’t tell the others?”

Mid-sentence, he realizes that… it’s not much of a secret at this point, right? Only Angel Dust and Vaggie are left in the dark, and he’s unsure if Alastor would even care if they knew. Lucifer peeks over at him, but his expression is carefully neutral. When his face is shuttered like that, it’s impossible to decipher what he’s thinking.

“You are? No problem! I’ll keep it down.” Charlie mimes zipping her lips, and throwing away the key. She’s taking it very well, all things considered. “Anything else I should know?”

“No no no, that’s all.” Lucifer shakes his head. “Thanks, Charlie. For… well, everything.”

“Aw, dad.” She pulls him into a hug. In the corner of his eye, he can see Charlie trying to reach for Alastor as well, but he had slyly stepped aside. “It’s just you and me, now. Of course I’ll be here for you.”

He squeezes her tighter, and she pats his back rapidly, trying to breathe. “Oof! Okay, okay. Should we go back to the party?”

Lucifer’s about to agree - but then he looks over at Alastor, and a better idea crosses his mind. “We’re actually gonna head elsewhere. But you have fun, kiddo. And… hey! Thanks for fixing the elevator.”

“The elevator?” Charlie gives him a weird look. “I didn’t fix it. I thought it started working again on its own, and that’s how you two left.”

“You didn’t?” Lucifer and Alastor exchange wary glances. If that’s the case…

Huh.

Vox presses the video call option on his watch, and Velvette appears on the screen. The princess may have banned cell phones at the party, but she never stipulated that he can't bring other electronics.

"Did you break the elevator, Vox?"

"Yeah, with my electrokinesis. And then I fixed it once I was done. I left before they could see me."

"Hope the information you got was worth all that effort."

"I'd say so. Drumroll please, Velvette!" He pauses here, waiting for her to do it, but she stares vacantly at him instead. "Never mind, I'll just tell you. Those two fuckers are keeping their relationship a secret."

"Are they?" Velvette doesn't sound all that interested, and he's a little put off by her lack of enthusiasm. *"No wonder they had their date in the middle of bumfuck nowhere."*

"Whatever, Velvette. It's time for your part of the plan."

At this, her face twists into a scowl. *"Do I have to?"*

"Need I remind you? *You're* the one who asked to join my scheme. If you still want us to pull it off, then yes."

Velvette rolls her eyes, and she hangs up without saying bye.

"What a stupid baby." Velvette huffs, pulling out a pink potion from her coat. She's really not excited to do this, but it's integral to taking down the hotel. She lifts the bottle up, watching as the bubbles fizz and pop.

“Bottoms up, babe.”

She finishes it in one go, and in an instant, she becomes invisible. She flexes her hand this way and that, but she can’t see herself at all. Perfect.

Alright. Velvette thinks. *Where are those two now?*

She scopes out the area, making sure to avoid other people as she slinks across the second floor. After some time of twisting and dodging the party guests, she finally spies Alastor and Lucifer in the distance. They’re turning the corner into a deserted corridor, the hallway lights casting a saffron-coloured glow in the darkness.

All she has to do is keep an eye on them, and make sure they don’t get in Vox’s way. Thankfully, the carpeted floors mask the sound of her footsteps, and she quickly catches up to them. Maybe this’ll be easier than she expected.

But then Alastor stops moving.

He glances over his shoulder, and for a second, they make eye contact. Velvette freezes in place, her heart in her throat.

There is no way he can see me.

Like he can hear her thoughts, Alastor lunges at her, swiping with his claw. She manages to dodge by a hair’s breadth, and she holds her breath as he slowly stands back up.

“What’s wrong?” Lucifer says, alarmed. Alastor points in her direction.

“Can you sense something?”

Lucifer approaches her as well, his eyes examining the air studiously. She doesn’t dare move, staying as motionless as possible.

After a moment, Lucifer takes a step back, his expression clearly unsettled. “There’s… something here. But I don’t know what.”

“How revolting. Shall we leave this hallway?”

“Yeah, let’s go.”

They walk away in a hurry, and Velvette hangs back, making sure to keep her distance this time. She can’t hear them from this far away, but at least they won’t be able to pick up on her presence.

If only she had Valentino’s job. His is so much easier.

Angel Dust's dancing with Husk in the centre of the room. He's trying to keep it together, keep it *cool,* but the way Husk smoothly leads their dance is making his heart beat rather irregularly.

"Woah, uh…" Angel Dust attempts to sound casual. "You're a pretty good dancer, huh, Husk?"

"So are you."

They twirl across the dance floor, and Angel Dust can't help but notice how handsome Husk looks in his suit.

Is it due to the effects of alcohol?

How beautiful the venue looks?

Or is it something else… entirely?

Get a fuckin' grip on yourself. Angel Dust thinks nervously. *It's just Husk.*

But maybe it's *because* it's him that Angel Dust can't stop looking, can't stop falling deeper and deeper into his gentle smile, his warm eyes, his grouchy exterior that hides his softness at the centre of it all.

Oh, fuck. That's cheesy. That's really cheesy, ain't it?

Angel Dust doesn't care about love. Nor does he particularly believe in it. Still, there's something about… Husk…

"You alright, Angel?" He asks. "You're weirdly quiet."

"I'm all good, babycakes. Especially now that *you're* here." He falls right back into Flirt Mode© - because it's easy - because it doesn't mean anything - and it's better this way, if his words are void of substance.

Empty, and saccharine.

"You know that I can see right through you, kid." Husk knits his brows together. "What's going on?"

Angel Dust gulps, feeling rather caught. He’s still thinking over what to say when he catches sight of Rosie, and now he’s got the perfect distraction.

“HEY! ROSIE!” He yells. “OVER HERE!”

Husk's eyes widen at this, and he abruptly drops his hold. Angel Dust can't look at him, and so retracts his arms to his side, watching Rosie instead as she makes her way over to them. She’s wearing an elegant pink dress, and she flutters her folding fan in the air.

“Why, hello, dearie. It’s been a while, hasn’t it?”

“It sure as hell has.” Angel Dust guides them all to the side, away from the dance floor. “You likin’ the party so far?”

“Oh, it’s terrific. You know, there wasn’t any food for me to eat last time, but Charlie provided some very appetizing fingers for this party!” Rosie says cheerfully. “Would you like one?”

“Uh, I’ll pass.” Angel Dust says flatly. “Thanks, though.”

“Well, well. More for me.” Rosie shrugs, and then she looks behind Angel Dust thoughtfully. He turns around as well, wanting see what she’s looking at, and that’s when he sees someone gross:

Valentino, strolling through the crowd all by himself. He’s acting a little erratically, however, conspicuously looking left and right before disappearing into a room.

“Well, that’s weird.” Angel Dust notes. “Val’s not usually alone like that.”

“My thoughts exactly.” Rosie flips her fan closed with a flick of her wrist. “We should probably follow after him.”

“Oh, fuck no! Not this again.” Husk lets out a groan, and Angel Dust tugs at his shoulder.

“C’mon! Let’s go get his ass. Besides, it was fun fightin’ him last time, wasn’t it?”

They stare at each other, Angel Dust gazing at him imploringly, and Husk throws his arms up in exasperation. He already knew that Husk wasn’t going to say no, but he still requires a little bit of coaxing at times.

“Fine, whatever! If you wanna do this so bad, we’ll go keep an eye on him.”

“Hell yes!”

Angel Dust links arms with Rosie and Husk, and the three of them hurriedly trail after Valentino.

Alastor leans against the second floor railing, and looks down at the parlour. The guests are busy wining and dining, with a few of them dancing merrily to the beat of the music.

“And why did you bring me here?” He glances at Lucifer, who is busy dealing with the curtains. He’s dragging it across the second floor, effectively hiding the two of them from the rest of the party.

“For this!” Lucifer grins at him once he’s done, gesturing towards the closed curtains.

“That still doesn’t quite answer my question.”

“Then, shh.” Lucifer puts a finger on his lips, and Alastor ceases speaking. They both listen as the band continues playing music, the tempo *quick-quick-quick-quick,* and Alastor drums his fingers to the rhythm.

“You hear it now?”

“Are you referring to the band?”

“Yeah.” Lucifer laughs a little, and extends his hand out to him. He looks particularly charming at this moment, the soft lighting casting warm shadows across his face.

“What do you say to dancing with me?”

Chapter End Notes

I won’t be updating next week, because I will be posting a ONE-SHOT! It’ll be out next Friday, Nov. 08. You know how I roll by now - it’s a slow-burn, silly romantic comedy with loads of tension! I hope you’ll read it!!

Fun Facts:
- Alastor has stated he’s never “been drunk” in (ch. 16)

- Those shadow minions are from (ch. 3, ch. 12, ch. 18 briefly, and ch. 20)
- Alastor finds his blood kind of gross in (ch. 19), but he does like his the taste of his skin (ch. 19 + ch. 28), and he also likes the taste of his mouth (ch. 33)
- Lucifer's praise kink, LOL, is from (ch. 4, ch. 6, ch. 30)
- Charlie threw a party to celebrate Lucifer and Alastor in (ch. 15/16)
- Charlie's rules for the Vee Party is in (ch. 33)
- Alastor and Lucifer have danced together three times: (ch. 10, ch. 13, ch. 29)
- Alastor had trouble calling him his 'lover' in ch. 26, but he's fine with it now! only took 10 chapters lol
- The Vees saw Alastor and Lucifer on a date in (ch. 32)
- In ch. 10, Rosie mentioned that there was no food for her cannibals, and Alastor said he'll bring it up to Charlie next time. So for this party, Charlie catered some fingers for her to eat!

My QUESTION for you: who will lead the dance this time, Alastor or Lucifer? Let me know in the comments!! I'll update OSAS on Nov. 15, mark your calendars <3

The Party (Act 2)

Chapter Summary

Previously on OSAS
-Alastor and Lucifer finally tell Charlie that they're a couple. Afterwards, they go to the second floor to dance with one another
-Team H.A.R.D: Angel and Husk are starting to become more aware of their feelings for each other; in the meantime, they're following after Valentino
-The Vees: Vox is planning something, while Velvette drinks an invisibility potion.

Chapter Notes

CH. 39 FANART:
- comic by: @dirtgrubber
- comic by: @myntesuniverse

THANK YOU AND LOTS OF LOVE!!! Send me anything via Tumblr, Twitter, and Bluesky

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"C'mon, follow faster."

At Angel Dust's coaxing, Husk and Rosie pick up the pace. The three of them maintain a careful distance from Valentino, who is currently leaving a trail of destruction wherever he goes.*

*See the following crimes: Valentino knocking over floral arrangements, stealing champagne, and generally being a loud nuisance.

"Is he fuckin' hammered or something?" Angel Dust complains. "Why's he acting like that?"

"We may want to put a stop to it." Rosie suggests. "It would be unfair to Charlie if her party gets ruined like this."

They both turn to Husk, who lets out a groan.

"You're not leaving it up to me, are you?"

"Who else could I be lookin' at, whiskers?"

“Like I said, don’t call me that.”

Despite all his complaining, Husk spreads his wings out and flies over, reaching Valentino in an instant. He seizes him by the arm, and Valentino whirls around in surprise.

“You’re being a real pain in the ass.” Husk says thinly. “Get some water and sit down.”

“Is the little pussycat looking out for me?” Valentino takes a swig from his champagne bottle, looking completely unworried. “What a good kitty.”

“ANGEL!” He bellows. “Deal with him, will you?”

“Just keep him there!”

Once Angel Dust and Rosie catch up to them, Husk wordlessly pushes Valentino over to him. “You should be careful, kid. He’s pretty wasted.”

Angel Dust sighs at this. “See, this is why I told Charlie we needed some kinda jail for the party.”

“Angel, baby.” Valentino lifts an eyebrow. “If you’d like to try out a new kink, do it on set, will you?”

“Don’t talk to me about work after hours.” He huffs. The last thing he wants to do is watch over Valentino for the rest of the party, but he’s acting way too drunk. An idea forms in his head, and he turns to face Husk.

“Husk, ya got any cards?”

“Always. Why?”

“Let’s play poker, then.”

Are those two grandpas planning to stay here for the rest of the night? Velvette thinks. They’re on the second floor balcony, overlooking the parlour. Lucifer had pulled the drop curtains down, effectively concealing them from watchful eyes.

She slinks closer to the red drapes, still invisible. Her job is almost done now; all she has to do is stand here undetected, and watch.

“So you whisked me away for a dance.” Alastor says, accepting Lucifer’s outstretched hands. “What style will it be this time?”

“Oh. Uh…” He tilts his head, listening to the band as they perform. It’s a merry tempo, and in his head, he rifles through the variety of dance styles that he’s familiar with, *the cha-cha, samba, salsa…*

But then he recalls Alastor dancing the Argentine tango with Mimzy earlier, the two of them centre-stage. Honestly, it looked pretty fun, and he kind of wants to do that now.

(The other reason - the ridiculous, outlandish truth - is that he’s just a *little bit* jealous. Sue him.)

“You wanna dance the Argentine Tango?” He offers. "I’m pretty good at it.”

Alastor mulls over it in his head, before nodding. “I’m quite adept, as well.”

“You can lead, then.”

They both pause at Lucifer’s words, their hands still joined. Truthfully, he doesn’t care who leads, or who follows; dancing together has always been enjoyable, even when they were merely acquaintances. It had been their shared language, a private conversation for the two of them.

Just like how music always bridged that divide, way back then.

“You… would like me to lead?” For some reason, Alastor looks taken-aback by his suggestion.

“Don’t you want to?”

He glances at Lucifer, looking a little suspicious. “Now, now. Since you suggested it, you may lead.”

“I mean, you like leading, right?” Lucifer counters. “You can do it.”

“Oh, I don’t have a preference. You go ahead.”

“You do it.”

“You should.”

“You lead.”

“You lead.”

They glare at each other, their hands clenching onto each other with escalating pressure. Eventually, Lucifer relents, loosening his death grip on Alastor’s palms.

“O-kay, this is never gonna stop. D’you wanna rotate?”

“Hmm.” Alastor’s deer ears perk at the suggestion. “I’ll allow it.”

“You’ll *allow* it?”

“Yes.” He simpers. “You should rejoice in my generosity.”

“World’s most selfless demon, everyone!” Lucifer sweeps a hand towards him, and although Alastor rolls his eyes, he seems more amused than anything.

After they adjust their positions, Lucifer ends up leading first, his hand placed on the small of Alastor’s back. It’s an incredibly intimate dance, and their bodies are pressed right up against each other, with absolutely no space in-between.

And they commence, spinning and moving with an almost practiced precision. It’s fast paced, one that emphasizes creative footwork and outrageous twists, which is why Lucifer’s having the teensiest difficulty in keeping up.

“You are off tempo. As always!” Alastor sings. Lucifer scowls, wanting to knock that cocky grin off his face. As they continue strutting across the floor, he lets go of him-

wraps his hands around Alastor’s waist-

and effortlessly raises him up in the air. Alastor hurriedly places his hands on Lucifer’s shoulders, his eyes darting towards him in shock.

“Are you *lifting me?”*

“Duh.”

He keeps him mid-air for a little while longer, marvelling at how small Alastor’s midsection is. Lucifer can pretty much wrap both hands around his torso; for someone so tall and big, Alastor’s surprisingly easy to carry.

“Put me down.” Alastor says tersely. His fingers dig into Lucifer’s shoulder blades, his eyes flashing, not with fury, but rather…

“You embarrassed?”

“No,” Alastor snaps, but he purposefully averts his gaze.

Ughhhhhhhhh. Cute.

Once he sets him back down, Alastor wastes no time to pull Lucifer into the follower position. His large hands guide him into a spin, and as he’s twirling and twirling and

t
w
i
r
l
i
n
g,

he can’t help but let out a laugh. Alastor tilts his head, looking a little confused.

“And why are you laughing?”

Lucifer grins. “Just having fun.”

Because he *is* having the time of his life, because everything is perfect, because-

Well. Almost perfect.

The band finally finishes, the music lulling to a stop, and they step away from each other. The room is unbearably warm after dancing, so Lucifer loosens his tie with one hand, trying to catch his breath. He undoes the knot, lets the tie dangle around his neck. A perfectly mundane action.

What is of interest, however:

during this whole process, Alastor’s gaze is practically glued to the motion, his eyes never looking away.

And it kind of makes Lucifer want to…

…tease him.

“It’s hot, huh?” He runs a hand through his blonde hair, messing it up on purpose. The way that Alastor likes it.

It works stunningly well - lures him in like a siren’s song - and Alastor steps impossibly close towards him. He settles both of his hands on Lucifer’s shoulders, his red fingers sliding

slowly across his suit jacket.

“It certainly is.” His voice sounds a little rough. “Perhaps you should…”

and then Alastor slips off Lucifer’s jacket for him.

Drops it on the ground, where it lands in a crumpled heap. Lucifer flicks his gaze up, and the startling intensity of his crimson eyes almost makes him look away; almost, but not quite, because he likes it - likes seeing his pupils dilated like that - likes being the centre of Alastor’s attention.

They maintain eye contact, red into gold.

And without asking, Lucifer places his hand on Alastor’s tie,

tug-

tug-

tugging it loose. It hangs freely around his nape, and Lucifer trails a hand down Alastor’s exposed throat.

“Better?” He whispers.

“Almost.”

Alastor shrugs his own jacket off, tossing it atop of his on the ground. With his tie askew and rumpled shirt, he looks uncharacteristically disheveled. Messy, in all the right ways.

The next part unfolds seemingly in slow motion.

Alastor hooks his finger onto Lucifer’s collar…

and yanks so hard, he pops a button off.

It flies out into the air, ricochets against something by the curtain, something invisible but definitely there-

-and Lucifer lunges his arm out, grabbing onto that imperceptible thing. When he hits something solid, he tightens his grip around the person (?).

“HAH!” He says triumphantly. “I knew there was something here. I figured if we started fooling around, you’d come closer to watch, you sicko. Although, I wasn’t sure where you were until that button hit you.”

“What - get your hands off of me!” The voice is high pitched, tinged with a British accent. It also sounds very familiar… one of the Vees?

“Velour?”

“It’s pronounced Vel-vette, old man.” She says, sounding a little exasperated. “And it’s not like I wanted to peep on you. How did you know I was here, anyway?”

“I might not be able to see you, but I can still feel your presence.” Lucifer glances at Alastor. “I guess you did as well, huh?”

“But of course.” Alastor pats his shirt down, looking completely composed. “I was wondering when you would strike, Lucifer, but you were unbearably slow.”

He glowers at him. “Why didn’t you get her, then?”

“Leaving it up to me again?”

“You’ve barely done a thing!”

“You really ought to be the sin of sloth, instead of pride.”

“Well, you’d belong in that ring of hell too!”

“Can you two please *shut up?!”* Velvette snarls. “You’re even worse than Vox and Val!”

They stop arguing, just for a moment, and Alastor slowly swivels his head to look in her direction.

“Do-not-interrupt-us.” He grinds out of his teeth. His eyes tick into radio dials, his anger practically palpable in the air.

“Or what, you ancient sack of bones?” She sneers. Lucifer can feel her trying to escape under his grip, and he immediately conjures up a pair of handcuffs to slap over her wrists. “What the hell! Are you fucking serious?!”

“Just stay in that corner and think about what you’ve done.” Lucifer says sternly. “Why are you here, anyway? Shouldn’t you be with the other Vees?”

Velvette hesitates, before speaking. “I… wanted some time to myself. Is that a crime, now?”

“Spying on people certainly is.” Alastor says coldly. “You all have such distasteful hobbies.”

“Whatever.” Velvette gesticulates wildly; she’s still invisible, but her every move is punctuated by the glowing handcuffs. “You two just sit back, and enjoy the show.”

“What show?” Alastor lifts an eyebrow. Despite the fact that Lucifer can’t see her, he can feel the smirk she’s sending their way.

“Oh, you’ll see.”

As strange nights go, this one definitely takes the cake. Angel Dust gazes over his cards, watching as Valentino, Husk, and Rosie reveal their own hands.

“Royal flush.” Husk says triumphantly. “I win.”

“Why you…” Valentino sighs, and pushes his poker chips towards him. “Fine. Rob me blind.”

“You’re forgettin’ a little something.”

Valentino grumbles, but he does pull off his gold watch, and hands it over to Husk. “You are really sneaky, you know. I’ll get back at you for this.”

Angel Dust throws his cards down, finally fed up with his babysitting duty. “What are you planning, anyway?”

“In regards to?”

“You fuckin’ know, Val. Why’d you all come to the Hazbin Hotel?” Angel Dust leans in suspiciously. “You could have hosted this stupid party anywhere.”

“You’re right about that.” Valentino shrugs, but there’s a malicious glint in his eyes. “I’m the wrong person to ask, though.”

“Why not?”

“I’m just the decoy.”

Angel Dust reels back at this. *“What?”*

Valentino cackles, and without a warning, he tosses a smoke bomb onto the table. It engulfs the room in a cloud of red, and as they cough and try to wave the smoke away, Angel Dust can hear the flapping of wings.

“Shit, he’s escaping!”

He reaches out, trying to grab for him blindly, but it’s no use - once the smoke clears, Valentino’s gone. They all rush out into the parlour, and Angel Dust does a quick scan of the perimeters, to no avail.

“Fuck! There’s too many people here!” He says miserably. “I can’t find Val at all.”

“Well.” Rosie places a hand on her cheek. “It seems that we’ve made a mistake.”

That Velvette girl is being awfully cagey. Instead of elaborating, all she does is gesture towards the curtain, her gold handcuffs clinking around her wrists.

Very well, then. Alastor thinks. He peeks through the red drapes, and stares down at the parlour underneath. Vox, Charlie and Vaggie are all standing atop of a large podium in the centre of the room, as though they're about to launch a presentation.

Lucifer pushes up against him, and he peeps through the curtains as well. "Oh, shit. What are they doing together?"

Alastor's unsure of the reason, but they get the answer when Charlie taps experimentally on the microphone. The guests quiet down at the sound, and she beams at them.

"Hi, guys! Thank you for attending the Vees' product launch party. Vox has some very exciting news, so I'll just pass it over to him!"

"Appreciate it, princess." He says, smiling politely. Vox snaps his fingers; a spotlight shines down on the three of them; and that's when all his faux-pleasantry disappears.

"Are you tired of fighting for your life?"

His voice booms in the silence of the room, echoing ominously.

"Do you want some *real* protection, instead of this half-assed one from the Hazbin Hotel?"

He points at Charlie, whose eyes widen at the motion.

"Then come get our new product!"

He lifts up a shiny gold bracelet, marked with a blue **V** right at the centre. It sparkles under the light, and the crowd *oohs* and *ahhs* over it.

"This is the only item in Hell that can guarantee you safety." Vox continues. "And I'll tell you what, it definitely beats the alternative. I'm sure some of you have heard about the princess' little project. The so-called Hazbin Hotel."

Vox pauses theatrically, and the audience waits with bated breath. Charlie steps forward to grab his microphone, looking slightly panicked, but he deftly avoids her reach.

“She claims it’s a place for redemption! For safety! Where you have to do stupid trust exercises with people you don’t even know. All for what? You really think the power of *friendship* will make everything okay?”

“Well, actually-” Charlie begins, but Vox cuts her right off.

“Sign a contract with the Vees, and we’ll give you this.” He waves the bracelet around, and it glimmers tantalizingly under the light. “You’ll practically be immortal with this on. No more worrying about disappearing forever. Not even an angelic weapon can harm you! So what are you waiting for?”

Charlie’s eyes swing wildly between the bracelet and Vox, her microphone slack in her hands. Vaggie jumps into action first, brandishing her spear at him threateningly.

“You absolute SHITHEAD!” Vaggie roars. “Is that why you wanted to host your party here? To try and make us look bad?”

“I don’t need to *try.”* Vox shrugs. “You look bad all on your own.”

She bristles at his provocation, and she turns to Charlie. “C’mon, babe. Let’s kill him. We can take him on!”

There’s a long silence as Charlie stares at Vox. Her expression is uncharacteristically stony, and even from up above, Alastor can see the clenching of her jaw.

But then she seems to think better of it. She lifts the microphone to her lips and swivels on her heel, looking out into the crowd determinedly.

“It’s all up to you.” She finally says. “If you want Vox’s… protection, then go for it. I just want to tell you one thing.”

She paces across the podium, her heels echoing in the quietude of the parlour. “Yes - we’re in Hell. This is literally the worst place in the universe! Even as your princess, I can’t promise you infinite power and protection. And maybe you don’t want to change, and become a better person.”

“Charlie. Keep it light, will ya?” Angel Dust calls out from the crowd. She smiles at him, whereas Vaggie sends him a glare.

“What I *can* do is make life better, for all of us. The Hazbin Hotel will protect you - feed you - house you - but most importantly, I want you to know that you’re not alone. No matter who you are, no matter what mistakes you’ve made… just know that it’s never too late for you.”

She takes in a deep breath, and extends a hand out to the crowd.

“You’ll always have a place with us.”

The throng whispers amongst each other uncertainly. As the crowd discusses over the two propositions, Lucifer lifts his head to look at Alastor.

“Charlie’s grown a little, huh?” He says fondly.

“She *has* been fighting for this since the very start. It would be far stranger if she simply rolled over.” Alastor pushes the curtain aside a little more, and they watch as two rows of people start to form in front of the podium:

A long line in front of Vox, angling to get his product.

And a short line in front of Charlie, who seem interested by her ideology. It’s a small number of people, but it’s more than Alastor expected.

It also appears to infuriate Vox, who looks at the queue with hatred.

“Are you serious? Some of you are still going towards her?” His eye morphs into a hypnotic swirl, trying to forcefully lure people towards his line. “Not on my watch.”

Charlie has exercised incredible patience so far, but this appears to be her last straw. Her demon horns emerge, and her eyes turn into a bright crimson, flashing with fury.

“Do not hypnotize MY PEOPLE!”

She throws her microphone at his face, and it smacks solidly against his screen. A hairline fracture crackles across Vox’s monitor, tiny yet noticeable.

“What the…” He lurches back, momentarily disarmed, and his hypnosis disappears. For one second, Vox looks visibly annoyed.

And then he calms himself down, a strangely devious smirk forming on his face.

“I’ll show you what happens when you cross me.”

He mimes a throat-slitting gesture with his hand, and that’s all the warning Alastor gets before everything changes.

Velvette suddenly shoves him, making him fall right on top of Lucifer. She yanks the curtains all the way up, and the spotlight shifts onto them instead, flooding them with light.

Lucifer whips his head to look at him, panic in his eyes. Alastor knows what it looks like to others - he’s straddling him, their ties are loosened, their jackets are off - and there’s absolutely no getting out of this one now.

“Those two have been dating in secret!” Vox says triumphantly. “Let that be a warning to you. If you don’t come to us, I’ll find out your secret, and reveal it to the whole world.”

Hushed voices ripple through the crowd, and while everyone’s eyes are on them, Alastor swivels his head to stare directly at Vox. He looks unbearably smug, certain of his victory.

I can't have that, Alastor thinks. *If Vox wants a show, then he'll get a show.*

He pulls himself off of Lucifer; as he stands up, Alastor offers a hand to him.

"Come now." He murmurs. "You really ought to smile."

Lucifer does grin at his words, relaxing immediately, and claps his hand onto Alastor's palm. Once he pulls him up, Alastor turns towards the crowd, completely blasé.

"Ah, yes. We are in a relationship." Alastor says casually. "If you'll excuse us, *my king* and I are rather busy."

Alastor places one hand on Lucifer's back,

one hand on his thigh,

swoops him into

a

dip

and kisses him square on the mouth. It's incredibly staged - he even lifts up Lucifer's thigh to enhance the drama, mimicking a wedding dip kiss - but the kissing is all real, real, real. Lucifer wraps his arms around his neck, kissing him back, and it's always an addicting sensation, perfect in every way.

In the background, amidst allllllllll the wolf whistles, he can hear Angel Dust scream:

"WHAT THE ACTUAL FUCK!"

Charlie turns around, about to ~~yell~~ *speak aggressively kindly* to Vox-

-but he's already slipped away into the crowd. Is he trying to escape?

Oh no you don't, she thinks. She's about to chase after him when a glowing portal appears beside her, and two familiar figures step out together.

“Dad! Alastor!”

“Charlie!” Lucifer hurriedly runs to her side. “You did great, standing up for the hotel like that.”

“Aw, thank you. Just doing my job.” She frantically points to Vox, who is slipping further and further away. “But, um, let’s go get Vox.”

“Shall we kill him?” Alastor says cheerfully. His eyes shine brightly at the prospect, and it doesn’t seem like he’s kidding.

“NO! No killing.”

“Really?” Lucifer furrows his brows. “Aren’t you upset?”

“I *am* upset. Really, really upset. It’s just…” Charlie takes in a deep breath. “Murder isn’t the way.”

Even so, she feels deeply resentful. She has feelings, after all - she gave them a chance, and they repay her like this? Ruining her party (again), trying to expose her dads (Alastor basically counts as one now, right?), and to top it off, attempting to steal her hotel guests?

“But I do believe in karma.” She finally says. “So if 'someone' decides to beat them up, I will just chalk it up to destiny.”

Lucifer perks up at this, seeming to understand what she’s insinuating.

“Sounds good enough to me.” He says mischievously. “Let’s go get ‘em.”

Lucifer flies through the air to look for the Vees. He finally locates the three of them snaking through the crowd, trying to make it to the front door.

Caught you, he thinks. He lands right at the entrance, blocking them before they can leave.

“Hey now.” Lucifer says conversationally. “Party’s not over yet.”

Velvette scowls at him. Her invisibility finally wore off, and she's managed to get one handcuff off her wrist. "This party is the fucking worst, so we'd rather go now."

"Oh? Leaving so soon?" Alastor calls out. The party guests make way so that he and Charlie can come closer. In the corner of his eye, Lucifer can also see the rest of the hotel staff approach, and together they form a circle around the Vees.

"We have a lot to do." Valentino says. "Gotta send out our products, right, Vox?"

"Aw, don't go yet." Lucifer walks closer towards them. "I've got to return the favour, you see."

"What favour?" Vox asks warily.

"I'll remind you, don't worry. First," Lucifer lifts up a finger, "you blackmail Alastor with his photo…" another finger, "then you release all those images at the masquerade ball…" a third finger, "and now you're trying to ruin my daughter's hotel?"

He can feel his demon horns protrude, his tail swishing out angrily. It makes the Vees huddle together defensively, and Vox lets out an irritated noise.

"Fine. Fine! I know how this game ends. Are you here to kill me?"

"No, no. Of course not. That would go against Charlie's ethos." Lucifer shakes his head. "But I can still do this."

With all his might, Lucifer punches Vox-

BAM!

right on his face. His monitor cracks into a million pieces, and the impact causes him to sprawl onto the ground. Velvette and Valentino hurriedly pick him up by his arms, and he looks up at Lucifer in an almost dazed fashion.

"If you mess with me, my daughter, my Alastor, or ANYONE ELSE that I care about, I will send you to the deepest pits of Hell." Lucifer threatens. "Now get the *FUCK OUT!"*

He pauses, and shoots them a smile.

"Please."

Without waiting for them to move, Lucifer sweeps all three of them into his arms, and tosses them out of the hotel unceremoniously. As he slams the door shut, he can feel Alastor staring at him.

He peeks over his shoulder, and.

Well.

There's something dark swirling in his vermillion eyes, a kind of deep-seated interest, and it sends tingles right down Lucifer's spine.

"So I'm *your* Alastor, hmm?" He finally says. Lucifer flushes a little, feeling a sort of retroactive embarrassment.

"That's… beside the point."

Mercifully, he lets it slide. "I am a little surprised you punched him."

"Why? I'm not a saint, remember?"

Alastor chuckles at this. "Indeed. Just a sinner, at this moment in time."

Lucifer smiles at him - Alastor smiles back - and it takes him a while to realize, but there are other people present within the parlour.

And for some reason, Angel Dust looks like he's torn between laughing and crying at this development. He places his hands on Lucifer's shoulder, and starts pushing him towards Alastor.

"Go onnnnnn. You two gonna kiss or what?"

"Oh, you've already seen enough today." Alastor says dismissively.

"What the - you ruined my investigation, and now I don't even get to see another kiss?" Angel Dust grumbles, and drapes his arm across Husk's shoulders instead. "Forget you two. Let's go, Husk."

At their receding backs, Lucifer calls out:

"Uh, what investigation?"

Vox has his arms on Valentino and Velvette's shoulders as they walk down the street. His head feels heavy - a consequence of having his screen completely cracked - and he needs help getting back home.

Physically, the Vees are supporting him.

Verbally, however, they're jeering at him with unbridled glee.

"Vox, you idiot." Velvette cackles. "Your big plan went absolutely nowhere. You must feel really stupid."

"Thanks, Velvette. I can always count on you."

"Shut up. I did what you asked of me. I kept them away so that no one can stop you from revealing your product. I even got those two in an incriminating position!"

"I stalled the other hotel members as well." Valentino adds. "You only have yourself to blame, Vox."

"Okay, I need a new group. If I could, I'd fire the both of you."

"You know, I never understood Lucifer's appeal until now." Valentino says thoughtfully, ignoring his griping. "That is one hot daddy. I wonder if he'd consider doing porn?"

"Just shut the fuck up and help me get a new head." Vox grumbles. "I'm due for an upgrade, anyway."

"Aw. Are you jealous?" Valentino purrs.

And somehow, Vox really doesn't feel anything.

"Not even. So Hell's most powerful guy teams up with Hell's most annoying guy. They're both terrible people." He lets out a defeated sigh. "Which makes them perfect for each other, I guess."

"At least you can focus on other things, now." Valentino places a kiss on his head, and Vox waves him away impatiently.

"Don't get all mushy on me, Val."

As they hobble back home, Vox makes a mental note to *officially* get rid of all his Alastor cameras.

Chapter End Notes

Fun Facts:
- Alastor was jealous of Lucifer dancing with Mimzy in (ch. 10) so I paralleled it this time!
- Lucifer lifting up Alastor parallels when Alastor did that to him in (ch. 21) and also in (ch. 33)
- Alastor offering a hand to Lucifer parallels when Lucifer did that for him: in ch. 16, they don't help each other up from the floor; in ch. 28, when lucifer offers his hand out to him, alastor hesitates before accepting; in ch. 34, he accepts Lucifer's help immediately!
- They danced the Charleston (ch. 10), the polka (ch. 13), the waltz (ch. 29), and now the Argentine tango! I picked it because I saw two men dancing the tango and it is just the most gorgeous dance in the whole world. You can check it out on YouTube!
- Also, with dancing: Alastor lead in (ch. 10), Lucifer lead in (ch. 13), they argued over who should lead in (ch. 29), and this one, they were very gracious and wanted the other person to lead. Character development!
- I saw that Vox changed his television head in canon, so I'm assuming he can switch to a new model later
- In Heaven, when Alastor and Lucifer did PDA, the angels flew away; in Hell, when they did PDA, everyone chose to watch. I wanted to show the difference between the two realms

I'll be drawing some OSAS requests if you'd like to see a scene from the fic: Tumblr, Twitter, and Bluesky
If you'd like to read more from me, I posted a one-shot last week! Link to fic here.

As we're nearing the end of the series, I'd like to slow down my updating speed so that I can write longer chapters, and wrap it up better. Next chapter will be on Nov. 29, see you then!

My question for you this time is: what kind of couple do you think radioapple would be? Super clingy and PDA in public, or careful and reserved?

The Aftermath

Chapter Summary

Previously on OSAS:
- It's the end of the Vees party.
- The Vees have unveiled a bracelet, guaranteed to protect anyone who wears it.
- Vox tries to out Alastor and Lucifer's relationship, but his plans get foiled.
- When the Vees try to run away, Lucifer punches Vox in the face.
- Now, everyone knows that they're dating! What will happen next?

Chapter Notes

CH. 40 FANART:
- comic by: @dirtgrubber
- @jonis06 drew a couple! You can see them here
- I received a birthday OSAS drawing!! by: @Xsilly_Smoke0ff

THANK YOU, truly the best part of my day is getting tagged in your fanart! Find me on Tumblr, Twitter, and Bluesky

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The party is over - the guests have left - and Lucifer's just about to head back to his room when Angel Dust grabs him.

"Oh, you're coming with me, king." He says. "Actually, y'know what? All of you, follow me. NOW."

Lucifer turns to look at Charlie, a little bewildered, but she merely gestures for everyone to come with. The hotel staff trail behind Angel Dust as he leads them into a deserted room; it's sparsely decorated, save for a board with a piece of cloth draped on top.

Once they all settle onto a seat, Angel Dust takes a deep breath, and stares right at Lucifer.

"How long has this been goin' on?"

"Uh, what?" Lucifer replies. Wrong thing to ask, apparently, because now Angel Dust looks like he wants to throttle him.

"What do you mean, *what?* How long have you two idiots been DATING?!"

“Oh, that? Well, it’s been…”

He glances over at Alastor, unsure about how much he wants to divulge. Sure, everyone knows about them now, but does he want to talk about their whole history, or…?

The thing is, Alastor doesn’t seem like he’s paying any heed. He’s simply examining his nails, as though the conversation doesn’t interest him whatsoever.

Guess he’s fine if I explain, then.

“Well, Sera brought me up to Heaven to ask some questions, and then Alastor came to look for me. We started ‘dating’ after that.” He says, miming out air quotes, and Angel Dust’s eyes practically bulge out.

“Are you fuckin’ kidding me? That was months ago! You didn’t think to tell us?”

Alastor lifts his head up at this. “And why should we inform you?”

“Why should you - LOOK AT THIS!”

Angel Dust yanks the blanket off of the mysterious board, and reveals the contents underneath. It’s a veritable smorgasbord of pictures and handwritten notes, all connected with a red string.

Strangely enough, it’s all photos of him and *Alastor*.

“What’s all this?” Although Alastor sounds blithe, he tightens his grip on his radio cane. “Were you trying to locate a weakness of ours?”

“It’s nothin’ that sinister.” Angel Dust waves a hand at him. “We were just planning to get you two together. Which ya *did,* all on your own, so our investigation team went nowhere.”

And then Angel Dust observes everyone suspiciously. “Wait a… none of you look surprised that they’re dating.”

A pregnant pause settles through the room. No one seems to want to break the silence, so Angel Dust swivels towards Rosie.

“Rosie. Baby. Talk to me.”

She places a hand on her cheek, and smiles at him ruefully. “Well, I knew about them already. I found out when I went to return Alastor’s jacket.”

“I knew too!” Niffty chimes in. “I crashed their sleepover.”

Angel Dust whips his head at this. “SLEEPOVER?”

“Niffty.” Alastor smacks her gently with his radio cane. “Shush, my dear.”

She grins at him, but she does shut her mouth. Charlie looks this way and that, before slowly lifting a hand.

“Um, they told me, actually. At the party.”

“Ughhhhhh.” Angel Dust has to hold onto the board to keep himself steady. “And what about you, Husk?”

Husk flinches at this, and he’s purposefully looking away when he admits:

“I caught ‘em holding hands.”

“And you didn’t TELL ME?!”

“He threatened to kill me!” Husk jabs a thumb at Alastor, who shrugs noncommittally. Angel Dust drags his hands down his face, before glancing at Vaggie.

“Lemme guess. You found out ages ago.”

“Oh, no.” She shakes her head. “It’s news to me.”

Angel Dust perks up at this information. “At least it’s not just me, then. You’re all a bunch of assholes, by the way. How could you let me find out this way?”

“I would have told you, but Alastor was too shy, so he swore me to secrecy!” Niffty says cheerily. This earns her another thwack from Alastor’s radio cane, and she rubs her head from the impact.

“Are you kidding?” Angel Dust cracks a smile. “The radio demon can feel shy?”

Alastor suddenly gets up from his seat, his eye twitching. “If that is all you brought us in for, I shall take my leave.”

“Wait, hold on.” Angel Dust says hurriedly. “You *are* dating, right? Why’re you two so far away from each other?”

Lucifer turns his head,

Alastor peeks at him,

and they finally make eye contact. Out of habit, they had chosen to sit at opposite sides of the room. Which is… right. It’s pretty unnecessary at this point, since everyone knows about them.

“Just a coincidence?” He says weakly. It’s a shitty excuse, and based on Angel Dust’s reaction (eyes squinting, mouth scowling, hands gesticulating), he clearly doesn’t believe it.

“Okay, whatever. At least tell me one thing.”

“What?”

Nothing could have prepared him for what Angel Dust says next:

“How far have you two gone, anyway?”

Lucifer chokes on air-

Alastor’s eyes turn into radio dials-

and Charlie looks absolutely scandalized.

“ANGEL!” She yells. “Can we just keep that, you know, private? It’s kiiiiind of between the two of them.”

Charlie’s thoughtfulness almost makes everything worse, somehow. Lucifer quickly leaps to his feet and picks up the board, tucking it under his arm.

“Conversation’s over. And I’m confiscating this.”

“Wha - hey!” Angel Dust protests. “That’s months of data!”

“Well, since I’m one of the subjects, I’m keeping it.” He says firmly.

With a wave of his hand, he summons up a portal, and absconds into the safety of his room.

Alastor watches as the gold portal flickers shut. He has half a mind to chase after Lucifer, but he’s not even certain as to what he should say. The utter nonsense that came out of Angel Dust’s mouth had caught him off-guard, and now his mind is flooded with strange thoughts.

Back when Alastor was human - when he was alive - he was so focused on killing and killing and killing and killing and (rinse and repeat to infinity).

Anything beyond that felt unnecessary. Which extended, of course, to all aspects of physical intimacy. Something that he has always been rather indifferent about.

But, hmm… he thinks, staring at Lucifer’s now-empty seat. *Could be entertaining to see Lucifer underneath me, begging for mercy… or perhaps if he were to crawl on top, his forked tongue darting out…*

“Alastor?” Charlie says gently, jolting him out of his thoughts. “Sorry if that made you uncomfortable. Angel, you should apologize too.”

Angel Dust scratches his head awkwardly. “Right, uh… sorry.”

Before: he would have torn him to shreds for even offering an apology.

Now: he feels nothing. Nothing at all.*

*Another thing that Lucifer had altered within him.

Alastor’s still a little miffed about being put on the spot like that, and so he decides to mess with him. “Oh, that apology is quite unnecessary. I would be happy to answer any and all questions.”

“Really?” Angel Dust says suspiciously. Alastor laces his fingers together, and gives him an insincere smile.

“Indeed. If you’d like to know how far we’ve gone… he certainly knows how to keep me up at night, ha-ha-HA!”

He’s referring to the sleepless evenings he’s spent thinking about Lucifer, although the double entendre is fully intentional.

Delightfully, it does the trick - Angel Dust chokes on air, and Alastor can’t help but cackle at his handiwork. Realization dawns on his face, and Angel Dust points a finger at him accusingly.

“Both you and Lucifer are the fucking worst!”

“Some may say a match made in Hell!” Alastor sings, and then disappears into shadow.

He has to go to Lucifer, after all.

Lucifer sets the board down with the rest of the Alastor Altar™, and then looks at it sheepishly. The number of items he owns is a little outrageous. Maybe he should return some of them?

Okay, so… he thinks, picking up the red robe, *this one? No. Maybe…* he grabs the pen, *this? Nah. What about…* he clutches the masquerade mask, *nuh-uh. Okay, so—*

"He-llo!"

"AGH!" Lucifer lurches back, and the items clatter back onto the table. Alastor hasn't materialized out of nowhere in a while, and he's not used to it now.

"Did I scare you?" Alastor croons, looking pleased as punch. "I fear that you are losing your edge."

"Fuck off." He scowls. "You're the least scariest person in Hell."

"Others would disagree with you. But you are always wrong, aren't you?"

"Well, 'others' don't know you the way *I* know you."

Alastor pauses, looking a little taken-aback. "I… hmm."

For a moment, he seems to be at a loss for words. It's a rare sight, albeit short-lived, because Alastor promptly swivels his head to stare at the board.

"And why is this still here? I had assumed you took it to burn it."

"Did you want me to?" Lucifer runs a hand down the side of it. "I figured it's a record of everything we've done. So…"

"You'd like to keep it." He finishes quietly. "You are overly sentimental, Lucifer. Such foolishness."

Still, though. It doesn't sound like an insult. (Not when he says it in that tone.)

They stare at the board wordlessly, and eventually, Alastor taps on one of the photos. It's a group picture of all of them at the amusement park, although he's a blurred-out mess in the background.

"You seem to have forgotten something."

Lucifer blinks, confused. "I did?"

"You stated that you would bring me to your amusement park, without anyone else present. But we have yet to return."

If he didn't know any better, Alastor almost sounds like he's sulking. Which is, kind-of-really-very-much *cute*. Lucifer stifles his laugh with a hand, and Alastor glares at him from the corner of his eye.

"Did I say something amusing?"

“No! No.” He says hastily. “It’s just, I thought you hated it. You… actually want to go back?”

“Why else would I bring it up?”

His words cause a flutter in his heart, and Lucifer really wants to hold him - hug him - kiss him -

but there’s a bit of a distance between them. Only a metre, if one were to measure, although it stretches on like infinity. Lucifer busies himself with rearranging Alastor’s belongings, trying to keep his hands occupied.

“We’ll go.” He says at last. “I promise.”

“Good.” Alastor seems appeased by his answer. It feels like a natural end point for their conversation, so Lucifer gives him a wave good-bye.

“Guess I’ll see you later. Buh-bye.”

He waits for Alastor to move, step outside, disappear using his shadow, etcetera etcetera *etcetera,* yet-

as he is often inclined to do-

Alastor says something completely surprising.

“Shooing me off already?” He takes a step towards him, and the distance shrinks, just a little. “What about all of our deals?”

“Our deals? Oh, wait. You want a compliment?” Lucifer smiles wryly. “A hug?”

Alastor stiffens up at the question. He places a hand on his neck uncomfortably, and turns his head away - but not before Lucifer notices the blush that forms right over his cheek.

He takes a while to respond, but when Alastor finally speaks,

(voice so small Lucifer has to strain to hear it),

he just about makes out:

“You have yet to kiss me.”

Lucifer’s heart tap-tap-tap dances away in his chest, and he almost surges forward right then, right there - wants to push Alastor down onto the desk and kiss him furiously, pull his red shirt up, run his fingers through his fluffy chest and-

TIME AND PLACE, LUCIFER, TIME AND PLACE. He thinks, a bit panicked.

What he *actually* does is take in a deep breath, and send him a lopsided smile.

“Of course. How could I forget?”

He leans in, about to kiss him on the lips, but Alastor shakes his head.

“Oh, I’d rather pick the location today.”

He’s being oddly cryptic, but Lucifer nods anyway. Alastor does have a preference of being in control; maybe he felt more comfortable taking the reins right now.

Alastor lightly places his hands atop of his shoulders. His fingers dig into the white cloth, and Lucifer stands there, waiting for his next move.

So

it’s

a fucking

out-of-body experience

when Alastor, he -

he tugs Lucifer’s jacket off in one smooth motion, dropping it onto the ground. He barely has time to react when Alastor swiftly starts to undo his pink vest,

(one-two-three-four buttons),

and then,

and-then-and-then and-then-AND-THEN-

he rips Lucifer’s white shirt right off, tossing it over his shoulders- shoves him down onto the bed, *thump!*- and Alastor hoists himself on top, boxing him in with his arms and legs, trailing his large hand down his torso, fingers skimming across his skin, leaving fire behind in its wake-

He suddenly recalls Angel Dust’s off-handed comment - *How far have you two gone, anyway?* - and excitement builds up under his skin, threatening to burst out at any second.

Goddammit, Angel Dust.

“Are you still concerned about your scale?”

Alastor’s voice pierces through the air. Lucifer wills his heart to slow down, to go back to normal, because it’s pounding so hard it’s practically about to crack his chest in half.

“Uh…” is his eloquent reply.

Alastor rolls his eyes, and points down at Lucifer’s waist. He glances down in that direction; his serpent scale shines under the light, and he self-consciously covers it with his hand.

“Wait, don’t - don’t look at it.” He stammers out, a little insecure. “It’s an imperfection. A mark. It’s…”

But then Alastor gently pulls his hand off.

Sets his arm onto the side.

Lucifer watches, a little mesmerized, as he continues to stare down at his scale. Alastor doesn't seem disgusted, or appalled; instead, he almost looks like he's admiring it.

"It's quite beautiful."

Alastor leans down, and kisses it.

The contact sends electricity sizzling down Lucifer's body, and he instinctively jerks up at the touch, *fuck.* They stare at each other, Alastor's eyes half-lidded, and Lucifer can't help but thrust his arm out, grab Alastor by the shirt lapels, pull him in for a kiss-

-and Alastor places a finger on his lips, stopping him in his tracks.

"Ah, ah, ah." He sounds far too gleeful. "Don't you remember our terms? We'll kiss everyday. But I do believe we've landed on only doing it once. So you may kiss me tomorrow."

Lucifer blinks once.

Twice.

And then, after finally registering Alastor's words, his jaw drops. "Are you serious? We kiss like, multiple times a day!"

"Just an oversight." Alastor looks so fucking smug that he wants to slap him. "I shall reinforce the deal, then."

"Not a deal."

"Bye for now!" Alastor says cheerily, and he disappears, leaving Lucifer on the bed with his shirt still open, his hair a mess, his clothes strewn all over the floor.

And more importantly, he feels like he's just been thoroughly made fun of.

"I'LL GET BACK AT YOU FOR THIS!" He roars, but he's talking to air at this point. He rolls over onto his side, his heart still fluttering. Lucifer can feel phantom traces of his touch, the way Alastor's lips pressed against his skin, and he glances down at the iridescent scale across his torso.

Somehow, it doesn't fill him with dread as it used to.

A few days later, Charlie's walking by the television when it powers up on its own. She feels a brief sense of déjà vu - which is only reinforced when Vox appears on the screen.

"Hey, Princess." He lifts up a hand as a greeting. His monitor is still cracked, but she can just about make out his contrite expression.

"Oh, hi!" She hovers her hand over the TV's power button. "Aaaaand, bye."

"Wait, hold up!" Vox shakes his head frantically. "I'm just here to apologize!"

At this, she looks at him suspiciously. "Really?"

"Yeah. I mean, I know we've done some things."

"That's… kind of an understatement."

"And I feel bad about them, okay?"

"No you don't!" Charlie says, outraged. "You just 'feel bad' because all your plans have failed!"

"I mean, that too." Vox shrugs. "But anyway, I've been doing some thinking. Interacting with your little hotel has been kind of a buzzkill. So I think it's best if we just settle our differences, and move on. We've got a ton of new contracts to handle, anyway."

"New contracts?"

"Yeah. After we released that bracelet, we've had sinners knocking on our doors everyday."

Charlie thinks back to their product launch party, where they had unveiled their brand-new bangle. "Wait a second, Vox. How does that object even protect people from harm?"

"Oh, that little thing? It's simple." He flashes her a wicked grin. "I lied. It doesn't do shit!"

"Vox!"

"What's the big deal? We're in Hell!"

Charlie lets out a groan, and massages her temple. She's absolutely certain that people deserve a second chance, that everyone is capable of change, but…

Wow.

"Okay, um. Is that all?"

“One more thing.” Vox continues. “I’m just here to tell you that I’ll run commercials for your hotel. You know that VoxTek controls the media.”

“Wait, what?” She scrunches her nose at this. “Why would you even want to do that?”

“I think Lucifer and I may have gotten off on the wrong foot.” He points at his monitor, still cracked from her dad’s attack. “So maybe you can tell his majesty that we did this for you, and he’ll leave us alone. How’s that sound?”

“Vox, it’s…” she pauses, thinking about how to phrase it. “As… great… as it is that you’re trying to make amends, I don’t really think that’s the way to go.”

Vox stares at her silently. And then, with a snap of his fingers, the television switches channels. A cheerful commercial starts playing, with the words

WELCOME TO THE HAZBIN HOTEL!

written right across the screen. Her jaw drops as she watches the video; it’s all footage from the past few months, where they tried to promote for the hotel:

- all of them busking at the gazebo
- her and Vaggie hanging out fliers at the amusement park
- a few of them taking the little Niffty demons out, exploring the city

and surprisingly, it looks… fun. Vox, for all his shortcomings, clearly knows how to brand and advertise something. It’s much better than anything they could have come up with, and when their phone number flashes across the screen, she almost reaches for her phone to call.

(The only thing is that she’s a *little* uncomfortable with Vox filming them without their permission. But other than that, it’s a perfect commercial.)

Once the video finishes, Vox’s face flickers back onto the screen. “So? What do you think?”

“It’s beautiful!” She says enthusiastically. “But, you knowwwwww, if you really want to make things right, you should say sorry to my dad and Alastor.”

He balks at the suggestion. “I’d rather not.”

And without so much as a goodbye, he forces the TV to shut off. Charlie sighs, and runs a hand through her hair. As unsavoury as it is that *Vox* made the commercial, this was the closest thing to a professionally-made ad for her hotel.

She slaps the TV anyway, wanting to vent out her frustrations.

“Behind you!”

Angel Dust quickly dodges as a new resident barrels past him. The hotel has been absolutely bursting at the seams with recruits, especially within the last few days. In fact, it’s so full of people that he feels mildly claustrophobic.

“Look, Angel!” Charlie pops up out of nowhere, excitement tinting her voice. “Isn’t it great? We have sooo many demons interested in redemption now!”

“Yeah. How’d you swing that?”

“It’s Vox, actually. He made an ad for the hotel last week, and it’s been really effective!”

“Vox?”

Charlie pulls out her phone, too distracted to explain further. “I have to tell Emily about this. See you later, Angel!”

Another sinner elbows him on their way towards the parlour, and now he’s officially annoyed. He quickly slips out from the side door to venture into the garden, where there’s not another soul in sight.

Finally, some fuckin’ peace and quiet, he thinks. He kneels down to look at the flowers, and he picks up the garden shears to snip some of the nicer ones. Maybe he can decorate the hotel with these.

As he’s arranging them into a bouquet, he suddenly recalls when he did the exact same thing for Lucifer and Alastor. He had handed them over to help set the mood - which, come to think of it, was completely unnecessary.

“Those assholes.” He stares at the flowers, feeling a little indignant. “Why’d I try so hard to get them together when they’re *already* dating?”

He tosses the bouquet onto the ground, before resting his head on his arms. He should be more upset at squandering his time. Maybe throw a punch or two at Lucifer as revenge.

But… as he reminisces about the past few months, the only thing on his mind is a certain bartender, in all his grumpy glory.

Shit.

Angel Dust runs a hand through his hair, feeling his heart beat a little more erratically. The thing is, Husk had been with him from the start of his Investigation©, and they spent so much time together. Way more time than he would usually spend with anyone.

And it's… well…

It's been kinda great. Admittedly. Talking with Husk, and theorizing with Husk, and sneaking around with Husk, and-

"You dropped this."

Angel Dust lifts his head up. As though merely thinking about him manifested him, Husk stands right in front of him, with the discarded bouquet in his hands. "You takin' out your anger on these things?"

"Ugh, Husk." He grumbles. "You're a real piece of shit, you know that? You just let me waste all those months in my life!"

"I mean, I wouldn't say it was a *complete* waste of time."

"And why not?"

Husk pauses, and looks at him rather thoughtfully. After some moment of internal deliberation, he offers the flowers back to him.

"I mean, I like being with you. So it's not a waste."

Angel Dust's eyes widen. He hadn't actually expected Husk to say anything like this, and he ends up cautiously accepting the flowers.

"I, well. I like… being with you, too."

They crouch together in silence, both staring at the flowerbeds like they're the most interesting thing in the whole world. Angel Dust doesn't really know what to say/do/think, until Husk speaks first.

"In fact, I'd do it all over again." He says quietly. "Follow you around on your investigation. Listen to you talk about your newest hypothesis. I don't regret a single moment with you."

The breeze picks up, making a few flower petals swirl in the air. Angel Dust turns to look at him, and there's a smattering of a blush on Husk's face - completely unlike him, yet endearing, all the same.

"Why?" Angel Dust asks softly.

"You really want me to spell it out?" Husk scratches his head. Angel Dust tightens his grip on his flower bouquet, still unable to believe it - can't believe that someone would want to be with him, even though he's such a mess.

And he finally comes to terms with what he already knew, deep-down.

"Oh, fuck it." Angel Dust mutters.

He grabs Husk by his shirt, and swoops in to kiss him on the lips.

There’s no hesitation when Husk kisses him back, and it’s absolutely perfect - the best kiss he’s had by far - and he’s never been good at romance, always thought that cheesy bullshit wasn't made for someone like him, but…

The sun is warm and bright,

butterflies flit about in the garden,

and the smell of flowers wafts through the atmosphere. Everything’s absolutely perfect, like it’s straight out of a movie, and nothing in his life has ever gone this smoothly before.

After some time, Angel Dust breaks the kiss, feeling so giddy it makes his head spin.

Fuck, it’s just a kiss. Get a hold of yourself.

“This is too romantic.” Angel Dust says frantically. “You - c’mon, let’s go fuck.”

He half-expects Husk to groan, or make fun of him, or do any of his usual Mr. Grumpy Pants schtick, but all he says is:

“Your room or mine?”

In the least suave way possible, Angel Dust slips and falls right onto the ground.

They don’t fuck.

(Not yet, at least.)

But they do return to the hotel to knock back some drinks, and Angel Dust doesn’t even mind all the sinners running around in the parlour now.

“Hey, everyone!” Charlie calls out. “Come in, come in. I have some biiiiiig news!”

As per her MO, Charlie had summoned them to make an announcement. Alastor stands at the entryway to the music room, scouring the premises; at the sound of his footsteps, Lucifer glances over.

And then promptly rolls his eyes.

“Man, it’s you.” He sounds rather miffed. Is he upset about how he had teased him last time, only kissing his scale? But seeing his face, all annoyed like that…

It only makes him want to tease him even more.

“It certainly is. How reassuring that your eyesight is still intact.”

“Even if I couldn’t see, I’d recognize you anywhere. Your footsteps sound like THIS.” He purposefully stomps on the ground as loudly as possible, and Alastor’s eye twitches.

“Ah, apologies. I *am* around seven feet tall, after all, so my gait is rather heavy.” He strides across the room, and makes his way to Lucifer. “Not everyone is as tiny as you. If I recall correctly, your height is about four feet?”

“Like HELL I’m four feet!” Lucifer springs up to his feet - they glare at each other - Alastor is about to shoot back a snarky retort-

“You two are *still* fighting?” Vaggie says incredulously. “What’s the point in dating if you’re going to argue all day?”

“It’s okay, Vaggie!” Charlie’s smile is a little strained. “Let’s just all take a seat.”

“Oh. Of course. Sorry, dear.” Lucifer immediately sits down on the loveseat sofa. Alastor sneaks a look at the empty spot beside him, before glancing away.

It’s a bit unusual, but he’s deliberating over where he should sit.

Angel Dust’s impromptu comment *(Why’re you two so far away from each other?)* affected him, just the slightest bit. It had been a necessary ruse when they were secretly dating.

Although, they can certainly sit together now, can’t they?

After a beat, Alastor perches onto the seat beside him, and then purposefully sidles up as close as possible, arm-thigh-calf pressing against each other. Lucifer turns his head over at this, eyes wide.

“Oh! Uh… hey.”

“Evening.” Alastor says, voice composed. He looks down at Lucifer’s leg, and -

before he can second-guess himself-

sets his hand down on his knee.

Lucifer’s eyebrows shoot all the way up, but he doesn’t try to push him off, nor does he seem to mind. So Alastor keeps his hand there, digging his fingers in to feel the warmth emanating from his body.

“It’s heatin’ up in here!” Angel Dust fans himself. “Knees! Am I right?”

“Angel, please.” Charlie shoots him a look, and then waves her phone in the air. “So, I spoke to Emily about all of our great progress at the hotel, and she’s invited me back to Heaven! I’ll present our new data to them, and hopefully, they’ll see that redemption is worth investing in.”

Everyone gives a round of applause at the news, and Charlie beams at this.

“They offered for us to stay overnight. I’m thinking, in terms of people, maybe… me, Vaggie, dad, Alastor? Like last time?”

Alastor tightens his grip on Lucifer’s knee. A lot had occurred when they last went up, and Heaven filled him with a strange mixture of feelings, both good and bad. As though sensing his hesitation, Lucifer nudges him.

“Y’know, you can have the ice cream again.”

It’s peculiar, but Alastor does feel much better once he hears him speak. “Ah, yes. The mysterious dessert that adapts to your tastebuds. Perhaps you won’t try and pawn your leftovers onto me, this time.”

“I was giving it to you because you stuck your finger in my *ice cream!* Gross, by the way!”

“Oh, you’re full of excuses.”

“I wanna go too!” Niffty interjects, tugging at Charlie’s pant hem. “I wanna see Lute!”

“You… do?” She mulls over this. “Well, I’m sure that’s fine.”

Vaggie ushers her closer, and mutters under her breath. “Niffty, and Heaven? That doesn’t sound like a good combination at all.”

“Well, it’ll probably be fine.” Charlie whispers back. “We can just keep an eye on her. How much damage can she even do?”

“You two aren’t bein’ very slick.” Husk says flatly. “We can hear everything you’re saying.”

“Ok, let’s all pack for Heaven!” Charlie says frantically. “Meeting adjourned.”

At this, everyone gets up to leave, including Lucifer. He’s already halfway up the stairs when Alastor finally follows after him, his footsteps rather hurried. For someone with such short legs, he walks quite quickly.

Should I just teleport to him? Alastor thinks.

That’s when Lucifer stops walking, and turns around.

“D’you need something?”

Alastor freezes at the bottom of the stairs. He doesn’t have an excuse prepared at the tip of his tongue - he only followed after him because he ~~feels an odd sense of attachment to him-~~

~~he doesn’t want to see him go-~~

Alastor lets out a growl, and places his hand over his face. He can feel Lucifer gaze at him curiously, gold eyes full of intrigue, and it’s enough to make him cave in to his sappy desires.

“I don’t want to leave you.” Alastor finally admits. “Not just yet.”

Lucifer’s eyes soften at this. He doesn’t reply, but he does remain there, as though waiting for him to catch up.

So he does, taking the stairs two steps at a time, and they stroll together in silence. Alastor has his arms crossed at his back, Lucifer has his arms crossed at the front, and there’s a noticeable gap between the two of them as they walk.

Neither of them really knowing how to act, now that their relationship status is out in the open.

“What will you do now?” Alastor eventually asks, breaking the silence. “Make preparations to go up, I presume?”

Lucifer starts at this, and then gives him an awkward smile. “I was planning on preening my wings, since they become kind of a mess if I don’t. I hate doing it, though.”

Alastor tilts his head. Lucifer had mentioned this habit once, back when they were viewing each other's tails. “Ah, yes. Didn't you consider it to be a bit of a chore?”

“Yeah. It's an absolute pain in the ass. I have too many feathers, I can’t reach specific areas unless I shapeshift, it’s - I’ve been putting it off for too long, though. So…”

They reach Lucifer’s door, and his hand hovers over the doorknob unsurely. Like he doesn’t want to leave yet, either.

But he starts turning the handle and Alastor wants to stay and the door gets pushed slightly ajar and so without even thinking about it he says:

“I can assist.”

Lucifer stops moving. “Huh?”

Alastor places a hand on the small of Lucifer’s back, and traces over the areas where his wings are located. He can feel Lucifer shiver a little at the contact, and it sends a zip of self-satisfaction within him.

“Why, his royal majesty should not be undertaking this task all by himself!” Alastor says brightly. “Why don’t you leave this to me, hmm?”

Lucifer gapes at him for a moment.

“You wanna preen my wings?”

“I wouldn’t put it that way. It’s simply my responsibility as a subject in Hell.” Although Alastor’s tone is dripping with mockery, Lucifer flashes him a mischievous smile.

“Is this just an excuse to look at me shirtless again?”

Alastor’s eyes widen, and his mind screeches into the dial-up tone,

krrrrssshhhhhhh.

He feels like a fish out of water again, unsure because he - he wouldn’t object to seeing that sight again, he wants to see it so bad, ~~more than anything else in the world-~~

“Kidding!” Mercifully, Lucifer lets it slide. “Then I command you. Preen my wings, sinner.”

He says it with mock authority, like he’s only joking. *Is* he joking? Alastor doesn’t make a move, feeling like he’s rooted to the spot, until Lucifer tugs at his shirt sleeve.

“You coming?”

“Yes.” He says, far too enthusiastically. But he doesn’t have the time to feel embarrassed, because Lucifer pulls him into the room, and then locks the door behind them.

Another day, another patrol in Heaven.

As Lute soars through the air, she hears the flapping of wings from behind her. She glances over her shoulder, only to make eye contact with -

Sera?

Lute ceases flying, and gives her a curt nod.

“Your highness.”

“Lute.” Sera says. “I was looking for you.”

She feels a brief flash of panic, but forces herself to keep her composure. “What did you need?”

“I wanted to inform you that Lucifer and his daughter will be joining us again, along with some other guests from her hotel. Seeing them might be difficult for you, so I’d advise you to keep your distance.”

Lute’s eyes widen. “You… don’t want me to be with them?”

“Well, the last time you came face-to-face with the Hazbin Hotel was with Adam, correct?” Sera asks. “I don’t think that would bring up good memories for anyone.”

She’s under the wrong impression.

But how is she supposed to know the truth, when Lute has yet to confess her past crimes? That she not only

A kidnapped Niffty
B brought her to Heaven
C lost her in the city
D before finally giving up on her revenge,
E she also hid this information from Sera for months?

Although Sera exercises some clemency, the idea that Lute can get off scot-free is absolutely ludicrous. It’s terrifying, owning up to personal mistakes. She has no idea what Sera will do to her once she finds out.

But she knows that she has to come clean. Especially now, with those Hazbin sinners coming back.

“I see.” Lute says eventually. “I’ll keep my distance.”

“Good.” Sera smiles. “I think that would be for the best.”

Lute nods, all the while plotting:

How do I talk to Lucifer alone?

Chapter End Notes

As promised, a longer chapter! That concludes Act 7: The Vee's Party / Not-so-subtle Flirting. We're moving on to Act 8! I have some loose ends in Heaven I'd like to tie up, and some foreshadowing that I'd like to address.

Fun Facts:
- Alastor's hated apologies since (ch. 2), but by (ch. 23), he's slowly gotten more used to them
- Both Lucifer and Alastor say inappropriate, double-entendre comments to Angel Dust (e.g. ch. 7, 11, 15, 22)
- They're supposed to visit the amusement park again, mentioned in (ch. 23)
- Alastor's always helped with Lucifer's insecurities - his wings (ch. 4, 18) and now his scale (ch. 30). Also, ppl really wanted Alastor to kiss the scale LOL so yes here it is!
- They were busking in (ch. 27), handing out fliers in (ch. 22) and (ch. 24), and explored the city with the Niffty demons in (ch. 29/30)
- Angel Dust gave Lucifer a flower bouquet in (ch. 32)
- Huskerdust slow-burn (only took 40 chapters LMAO)
- Thinking about where to sit parallels when Lucifer was worried about that in (ch. 14)
- They ate ice cream in Heaven in (ch. 18)
- I've wanted to write wing-preening since CH 15 and they did talk about in (ch. 35)
- Lute had kidnapped Niffty in (ch. 16), and Lucifer told her to go confess her crimes in (ch. 26). So now, we'll finally reach the conclusion of that!

I HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION: would you read an 18+ OSAS spinoff fic, rated E (explicit), and it would be radioapple navigating sexual intimacy? Let me know in the comments! Next update will be Dec. 13, see you then <3

The Moon (Reprise)

Chapter Summary

Previously on OSAS:
- Team H.A.R.D's investigation is finally revealed to Alastor and Lucifer
- Vox's commercial attracts a ton of new sinners to the Hazbin Hotel
- Huskerdust finally start dating
- They plan on going up to Heaven
- Lute decides to speak with Lucifer

Chapter Notes

CH. 41 FANART:
- drawn by @etherael__: 1 + 2
- comics by @dragoonking25: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5
- drawn by: @dirtgrubber
- drawn by: @0-cloud-puff-0
- drawn by: @jonis06
- OSAS MEMES my beloved: 1 + 2

Find me on Tumblr, Twitter, and Bluesky

Also! I was asked what kind of music I envisioned Alastor and Lucifer playing. So they normally play jazz, but the exact vibe I'm channeling is the piano/violin duet First Love (A Response) by Ming Quay, timestamp 2:03.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There's not much else that Alastor can do, but wait.

He grips onto the edge of the table, watching as Lucifer smoothly removes his jacket-vest-shirt, before placing them onto a chair. His back is facing towards him, and so Alastor stares at the curve of his spine, counting each vertebrae as his eyes roam up,

one…

two…

three…

“Hey.” Lucifer glances over his shoulder. He looks slightly embarrassed, based on the faint flush across his cheeks. “Can you at least take your jacket off? It’s a little weird if I’m the only one topless.”

It’s a reasonable enough request. Besides, back when Lucifer healed him, he had taken off his shirt as well, just to ease Alastor’s discomfort.

“Fair enough.” He shrugs off his jacket without any hesitation, and places it over Lucifer’s clothing. The sheer nonchalance in his actions makes him freeze for a second - a few months ago, he would have felt much too uneasy to remove his garments.

But at this juncture, the two of them have stripped so many times, he doesn’t feel any sort of worry.

(He has no idea what to make of that, so he just sets the thought aside.)

Lucifer sits down on the edge of the bed; Alastor perches there as well; they’re sitting far away from each other, with a palpable silence stretching between them uncomfortably.

“Are you some kind of a monster?” Lucifer finally says. Alastor tilts his head to the side, confused.

“You’ll have to elaborate.”

“Your shoes.” He points at Alastor’s heeled boots, shining under the light. “You’re not actually gonna go on the bed with them on, are you?”

Alastor lets out a grumble, but he easily slips back into repartee. “So many rules. I think I ought to rescind my offer.”

“No take-backs. You’re not leaving until every feather is perfect.”

“That is a bit of a tall order. Ironic, coming from you, hmm?”

“WOW! You talk big, but can you even handle it?”

“Certainly! My arms are long enough to reach your wings at any angle, unlike *you.”*

Lucifer sticks his tongue out at this, clearly miffed. “Oh, fuck you.”

Alastor smirks, pleased that he won this round of banter. He ends up pulling his boots off anyway, revealing his large, red hooves. Lucifer bends down to take a closer look, and his expression goes from angered to happy in an instant.

“Your hooves are so cute!” He coos, his eyes sparkling. “Y’know, I didn’t get a good look at them when we slept together. But, wow.”

Lucifer reaches out, like he’s about to touch one of them, and Alastor immediately dodges his attempt. He’s struck with the most ridiculous urge to hide his hooves, ~~although it’s rather nice to be fawned over -~~

“Lucifer.” He says, his voice slightly strangled. “You ought to remove yours, as well.”

“Oh, right.” Lucifer retracts his arm and kicks off his boots, letting it fall messily onto the ground. Once he’s done, he climbs towards the centre of the bed, and Alastor slowly shuffles over to him.

They rearrange themselves until they sit facing towards one another, and *that’s* when he sees Lucifer’s hooves, which makes him think of one thing on loop:

tiny tiny tiny tiny tiny tiny tiny tiny tiny tiny tiny tiny tiny tiny tiny tiny…

Without even planning on it, Alastor grabs onto Lucifer’s leg, his hand completely wrapping around his thin ankle. Lucifer jumps a little, but he doesn’t back away, just stares at him with some surprise.

“Your hooves are half the size of mine.” He murmurs. “Everything about you really is so…”

“Small?” Lucifer offers, and Alastor quickly shakes his head.

“Appealing.” It slips out of his mouth - causes regret to shoot through his body -

but Lucifer just looks at him tenderly, and it makes everything okay, somehow.

Alastor takes the opportunity to look upwards, towards his torso. Although he’s seen Lucifer shirtless on numerous occasions, he had always averted his eyes as much as possible.

Now, Alastor looks right at him, cataloguing the lean lines of his body, eyes glued onto his chest, his toned pectorals, his perky pink nipples…

“My eyes are up here.” Lucifer suddenly says.

Alastor quickly looks at his face instead, a bit abashed, but Lucifer just shoots him a shy smile. He appears to be about as flustered as Alastor feels, and the air is thick, heavy.

Suffocating.

He almost wants to run away, but he doesn’t. (Not anymore.)

Alastor merely composes himself, and lets go of Lucifer’s ankle. “Shall we begin?”

Lucifer nods slightly, and swivels so that his back faces towards Alastor. His wings spread out, so large it practically becomes a barrier between them, and he has to peek through the feathers to see him.

“You can just work on the bottom wings.” Lucifer instructs. He’s in his full demon form now, and Alastor can make out the tips of his vermilion horns, jutting out from his forehead. It’s quite rare to see this side of him - such a shame, considering that he’s always enjoyed the view.

He runs a hand through Lucifer's feathers, before offering him a mock salute. "Of course, sir."

"Just shut up and be useful, alright?"

They spend the rest of their time together in silence, working away in tandem. Alastor methodically takes care of his feathers, and he takes the opportunity to examine them from up-close.

Quite stunning.

He's always been rather enamoured by them, even when they were merely acquaintances. He pockets a particularly fluffy feather when Lucifer's not looking, tucking it away carefully.*

*He'll just treat it as a tip.

With the two of them preening together, the whole activity is over much sooner than he expected. Lucifer flaps his wings experimentally, appraising the feathers with a careful eye.

"Think we're done here." He calls out. Alastor is about to respond, but he's a little distracted by the way his tail swishes leisurely in the air,

left,

right,

left,

right.

Without thinking much of it, Alastor runs a hand down the length of his tail, touch ever-gentle. It still causes Lucifer to visibly jolt, and he whips his head around to look at Alastor.

"What're you doing?"

He sounds slightly breathless, but not upset. A confusing reaction. Alastor slowly strokes down, down, down, watching with interest as Lucifer's gaze grows increasingly heavy.

Is he enjoying it? Alastor thinks.

And an idea makes its way into his head.

"Oh, just this."

Alastor brings his pointed tail to his lips, and kisses it.

Lucifer's eyes widen - face flushes -

and then his tail quickly wraps around Alastor's wrists, acting as makeshift handcuffs. It's not terribly tight; he could slip out, if he wanted to.

But - as though he were possessed - he merely keeps his wrists together, watching as Lucifer steadily crawls towards him.

“What are you plotting?” Alastor says, voice deliberately even. Lucifer shoots him a cocky grin, revealing his sharp teeth.

“Now you can’t run.”

His face is so close, Alastor can practically see himself reflected in Lucifer’s eyes, the sclera blood-red. His favourite colour.

And then Lucifer grabs onto Alastor’s biceps, fingers digging in pleasantly,

leans in in in in *in-*

and starts peppering his face with what feels like a million little kisses, on his cheeks-nose-forehead-cheeks-nose-forehead. Alastor blinks with every kiss, too stunned to react in any other way.

“There.” Lucifer places one last kiss on the corner of Alastor’s mouth, not quite on his lips, and it makes him want *more,* wants to kiss him with every fibre of his being. “Done.”

Alastor finally finds his voice, and he says:

“Well, I’m not.”

He tilts himself forward, wrists still trapped within Lucifer’s tail, and kisses him square on the mouth. Lucifer lets out a little noise of surprise before returning the kiss, hands moving to the small of Alastor’s back, and everywhere he touches burns like fire, ignites his insides-

feels so good-

and Alastor deepens the kiss, the movement of their tongues slow and languid. Lucifer’s tail tightens its grip around Alastor’s wrists, like an involuntary response, and the newfound pain feels almost titillating.

Alastor’s the one to break the kiss, a bit dazed, and a strand of saliva glistens between them. Lucifer wipes it away from Alastor’s mouth with his thumb, the action startlingly gentle. His hand moves to cup Alastor’s cheek, and he instinctively leans into his touch.

“You really are good with your mouth.” Alastor murmurs off-handedly. “But you did tie that cherry stem, didn’t you?”

Lucifer smiles at him impishly. Like he’s hiding a secret.

“I’m multi-talented.”

His sentence is thick with implication, and it makes Alastor come back in, wanting to kiss him again, and then-

perplexingly-

Lucifer dodges it.

What in the world? Alastor stares at him, and Lucifer just bats his crimson eyes innocently, the smile on his face growing bigger and bigger.

“Gotta stick to the deal! Didn’t *someone* say that we can only kiss once a day?”

He-

Alastor physically can’t speak. He may have mentioned that prior, but it was only because he couldn’t resist messing with him. He should have known that Lucifer would just return the favour.

“Oh, that is unnecessary.” Alastor manages to find his voice. “We ought to have more.”

“The radio demon, not upholding his deals? Scandalous. Don’t worry, buddy. I’ll keep you on track.”

The rest happens in the blink of an eye:

As Lucifer gets off of the bed, he grabs Alastor by the waist, and tosses him over his shoulder. He’s holding him as though he’s just a sack of potatoes, and Lucifer strides across the room confidently.

“Where are you taking me?” Alastor can’t hide the slight panic in his voice, and he slaps Lucifer’s back a few times to get his attention.

“Out! We’re done here.”

Lucifer kicks the door open, and-

actually, literally, throws him out. Alastor lands on the ground unceremoniously, and Lucifer tosses his shoes at him as well, his red boot smacking directly onto his head. When Alastor turns around to yell at him, that man has the audacity to *slam the door shut.*

He pulls himself up, and impatiently knocks against the entryway.

“What do you want?” Lucifer asks, voice muffled behind the door.

“My jacket is still inside. Return it to me.”

“Well, it’s mine now. And don’t you dare teleport back in here, ‘cause I’ll just kick you out.”

Alastor growls, and digs his claws deeper into the wood. *“Lu…ci…fer…”*

He suddenly hears a peal of laughter down the hall, and Alastor whips his head over at the noise. Unfortunately, It’s Husk and that Angel fellow, who have undoubtedly witnessed everything that had just occurred.

“NO FUCKING WAY! Did you just get kicked out of the bedroom?!” Angel Dust is cackling so hard he has to clutch his stomach. “You’re *literally* doing the walk of shame! I- I’m-”

Angel Dust throws his head back, with tears streaming down his face. Next to him, Husk has his hand covering his mouth, but his body shakes with suppressed laughter.

Alastor bristles at this, full of vexation. They may not have any ill intentions, but he’d still prefer if they had *some* fright when they see him walk down the halls.

This won’t do, he fumes. *I’ll put them in their place.*

He immediately grows into a gargantuan size, towering over the two of them threateningly. All the hallway lights crack into a million pieces, engulfing them into darkness, and the only light source is from his own glowing red eyes.

Alastor bends down, a deep thrill hurtling through his body as Angel Dust yelps and hides behind Husk. *This* is what he enjoys.

To intimidate. To terrorize. To strike fear into someone’s heart.

“If you keep bothering me…” Alastor warns, voice dark and guttural, “I will rip out Husk’s spine.”

“What did *I* do? It’s all Angel!” He argues. And then, in the most shocking turn of events, Angel Dust yells out,

“HEY, LUCIFER! YOUR BOYFRIEND IS TRYIN’ TO KILL US!”

Lucifer bangs against the door with his fist, still not coming out. “Quit it, Al. Charlie would be sad.”

“AL?!” Angel Dust shrieks, and Alastor growls unhappily, a harsh sound from deep within his throat.

“You-” He massages his temples, feeling chagrined and embarrassed and defeated, all at once. “I am far too tired to deal with this, so I’ll permit you to live another day.”

Without another word, he disappears into shadow.

The two of them scamper out of the hallway, and Husk hits Angel Dust's shoulder once they're alone. "You almost got us killed, idiot!"

"Nah. I think you were in more danger than I was."

"That doesn't make it any better."

"It makes it better for *me."* Angel Dust snickers. He doesn't look apologetic at all, and Husk lets out a resigned sigh.

"See why I didn't tell you about their relationship now? You shouldn't stick your nose into his business."

"But it's fun!" Angel Dust loops an arm around Husk's shoulders, and brings him snugly to his side. "And, admit it - ain't it satisfying to see that Alastor has a deactivation switch? When he gets all pissy, you can just get Lucifer!"

Husk thinks about the prospect. "That… could be useful in the future. But the next time you wanna rile him up, don't do it when I'm here."

"I'll make it up to ya." Angel Dust wiggles his eyebrows suggestively. "You knowwwwww, Charlie and them are leaving for a few days, so we'll be the only ones at the hotel."

To really emphasize his point, Angel Dust makes a crude gesture with two of his hands, and Husk looks at him with fond exasperation.

"Really? I thought you liked having an audience."

"Not with *them* around! They're practically like family now." Angel Dust sticks out his tongue, looking a little grossed out. Husk chuckles, and they continue walking like that, Husk's arm around his waist, Angel Dust with his hand on Husk's shoulder.

When he glances over, Angel Dust's mismatched eyes stare right at him, crinkling happily when they meet each other's gaze. He leans a little more into the crook of Angel Dust's waist, the sharpness of his body surprisingly pleasant against his.

Well. If it's just the two of them at the hotel…

"How 'bout 10 pm tonight?" Husk eventually asks. Angel Dust coughs violently at the idea, and he has to pat his chest a few times to calm down.

"Really? I-" He takes in a deep breath.

In, and out.

And then, like he's made up his mind, he shoots Husk a confident smile. "Yeah. Okay. My room?"

“Your room.”

“Now you’ll see how I won all those awards.” Angel Dust purrs, transitioning right into Flirt Mode. He never really liked it before, but Husk can feel his earnestness now, like he really *is* looking forward to sleeping with him. “Strap in for the night of ya life, baby!”

“I’ll hold you to that.”

Husk glances over at the clock on the wall, noting that the hands are pointing at 6 pm.

Why’d I pick such a late hour? He thinks regrettably.

So it’s back to this, then.

Lucifer watches the familiar sight of the portal, flickering in the air. For the first time, visiting his hometown in Heaven doesn’t fill him with a sense of nausea. Rather, he’s kind of… looking forward to it.

As he’s about to step through, Charlie grabs his arm. “Wait, dad. Do you think they know about Niffty?”

“You mean, that she got kidnapped?” They both look at Niffty, who is perched atop of Alastor’s head without a care. “Maybe we should see if Sera brings it up. If she doesn’t, we can just keep it to ourselves for now.”

“Besides, who knows what they will do to her, hmm?” Alastor pipes in. “Those angels are quite the stickler for the rules.”

“It hurts to say this, but… I do agree with Alastor.” Vaggie relents. “Even though it wasn’t our fault, they could use this against us. *And* against the hotel.”

“Right.” Charlie says thoughtfully. “Okay, we’ll just keep it hush-hush. Let’s go!”

“Yep!”

With that settled, Lucifer steps through the portal first, and the rest of them follow in procession. The golden gates of Heaven glint underneath the pale moon, and everything is

aglow from the stars that dot the indigo skies.

Right underneath the arches, he spies the tall figures of Sera and Emily, who appear to be waiting for them. They both light up once they notice the Hazbin staff, and they immediately fly over to greet them.

“Lucifer.” Sera says kindly, her smile genuine. “It’s an honour to see you again.”

She has her arms outstretched into a hug, no sign of hesitation like the last time, and Lucifer immediately accepts. It’s rather comforting, being in her embrace, and Emily wraps her arms around them as well.

“Aw, yay!” She squeezes them both reassuringly. “Group hugs, my favourite!”

“Wait for me!” Charlie dashes over, and practically tackles them in her haste. Since Lucifer’s at the core of it all, he’s on the verge of being suffocated to death. Although, in terms of *dying,* this would be a pretty good way to go.

Fortunately, he’s rescued from his impending Death By Cuddles™ when Niffty tugs at Charlie’s pant hem.

“Charlie!” She says impatiently. “Let’s go in already!”

“Who's this?” Emily drops her embrace, and she looks down at her curiously. That answers one question, at least - they don’t know about Niffty yet.

“This is Niffty!” Charlie quickly steps in. "She’s our maid.”

“I clean!”

Emily crouches down to shake her hand, pumping her arm one-two-three times.

“Aw. You’re so cute!” She chirps. “You could almost pass as a cherub, actually. You’re just missing some wings. Right, Sera?”

“You *are* the same height.” Sera concedes. Niffty grabs onto Emily’s dress, and appraises it with interest.

“Gimme wings, then! And I want a dress like yours!”

“Niffty!” Charlie scolds, sounding absolutely horrified. “Don’t be so rude. I’m sorry, Emily.”

To her credit, Emily only lets out an airy laugh. “No, it’s okay! If you want wings, I can get you some temporary ones.”

She waves her hand, and in an instant, a pair of holographic wings appear on Niffty’s back. It’s eerily similar to the ones that she had on last time; back then, she had disguised herself as a cherub to escape any sort of detection. Lucifer glances at Emily, unsure if she did that by design.

Is she trying to smoke us out?

The thing is, all Emily does is *ooh* and *ahh* over Niffty's new wings, so it doesn't seem like she has any ill intentions.

"Niffty, if you like my dress, check out your closet in your bedroom!" Emily says brightly. "I've actually given all of you some clothes for your time here. I thought it might be fun."

"Aw, Emily!" Charlie beams at her. "That's so thoughtful."

"Yes. How thoughtful." Vaggie repeats tersely, and she takes a pointed step in front of Charlie, blocking her from the seraphims protectively.

They don't seem offended; rather, Sera merely motions towards the promenade.

"Shall we proceed, then?"

"O-M-G, YES!" Charlie says enthusiastically.

And with that, they make it through the gates of Heaven.

As it's quite late at night, most of Heaven's citizens are asleep at this hour. Emily and Sera guide them into an opulent hotel, similar to their own down in Hell. The biggest difference is the colour scheme - pearly white and gleaming gold - but other than that, the two buildings are practically identical in scale.

They take the metal elevators to the highest floor, before meandering through the seemingly endless hallways. Charlie and her friends are at the front of the line, chattering away with Emily, while Lucifer hangs out at the rear.

After a minute, Sera slows down her pace, and now she's walking right beside him. They're at the back, far away from the others so that no one else can hear them.

Except Alastor, apparently, who purposefully squeezes right in-between them.

"Did you need something?" Alastor asks Sera, his tone chilly. She lifts an eyebrow, before leaning forward to try and speak to Lucifer.

“I only wanted to ask if you completed your song. You had some difficulties composing it, the last time we spoke.”

“Oh! You remembered?” Lucifer feels a bit touched by this. “I did end up making a piano accompaniment. Thanks for the suggestion.”

“That sounds lovely.” Sera says sincerely. She’s much kinder than Lucifer’s used to - her warmth is something he hasn’t felt in a long, long time - and it fills him with a forgotten sense of nostalgia.

Lucifer elbows Alastor, trying to get his attention. When he looks down at him, Lucifer cups a hand to his mouth, murmuring quietly.

“Let’s perform the song for her.”

It’s to be expected, but Alastor’s deer ears flatten on his head. “Oh, I’d rather not.”

“She helped me make it!” His voice raises just a little bit; Sera looks over at him curiously, and he tries to school his voice back to a hushed volume. “Without her, I don’t think I could have finished it.”

Alastor glares at him with thinly-veiled dissatisfaction. “You required assistance, and did not call upon me?”

And now Lucifer’s torn between smacking him or kissing him. “It was a gift for *you!* How could I have asked you?!”

“Oh, excuses, excuses.”

“What do you mean EXCUSES?!”

He can’t control his volume this time, and Emily - who is standing all the way at the front - looks at him worriedly. “Are you all good over there?”

“Just perfect!” He manages to say. “Where, uh. Where are we now?”

Emily doesn’t look like she quite believes him, but she lets it slide. “It’s pretty late, so I thought I should just take you to your bedrooms. This one here is for Vaggie and Charlie.”

She points at a glowing gold door, and the two of them wheel their suitcase over. When they swing the door open, it leads into a massive room, positively dripping with luxurious ornamentations.

“Oh, wow!” Charlie’s eyes sparkle. “This is beautiful!”

“It *is* much better than our last room.” Vaggie reluctantly admits. Charlie hauls her suitcase in, and she waves good-bye at Lucifer.

“See you tomorrow, dad!”

“Good night, Charlie.”

After they close the door, Emily gestures to the room from across the hall. “And this one is for Niffty.”

“Mine!” She scampers in without sparing them even a passing glance, and she slams the door shut. Emily spins to look at Alastor and Lucifer, her eyes twinkling conspiratorially.

“Your rooms are right this way. Come with me!”

She takes them further and further down the corridor, and it’s just him and Alastor left from the Hazbin Hotel - which feels incredibly calculated.

Even more so when Emily looks this way and that, before whispering to them. “Are you two still keeping your relationship hidden? I didn’t want to ruin your cover, so I gave you separate rooms.”

She motions towards their bedchambers, located at the very end of the hall. It’s pointedly far away from everyone else, and tucked in a rather private corner.

“Oh! Uh, that’s kind of you.” Lucifer’s face reddens at this, a little embarrassed by her considerate nature. “I mean, everyone knows by now, so it’s fine.”

Emily gasps, and she genuinely seems happy for them. “Really? That’s great! Ooh, do you still have that list of romantic spots in Heaven?”

Without waiting for his answer, she conjures up the list again, and shoves it into Lucifer’s hands. “Never mind- here’s a new copy. You can visit them tomorrow!”

“How wonderful.” Alastor says, deeply sarcastic, but Emily just clasps her hands together in delight.

“Of course! I hope you’ll like them.” She pauses, and then gestures towards the rooms. “Did you two want to share a room instead?”

A static noise echoes in the hall - presumably from Alastor, who looks almost shell-shocked by the suggestion.

“Pardon?” His radio filter slips off for one second, and Lucifer hurriedly answers instead.

“No-no-it’s-fine-THANK-YOU.”

Sure, they’ve spent the night together before, once, after he had suggested it.

But.

Wow, they haven’t really talked about doing it again, and based on Alastor’s reaction, it’s not the greatest time to bring it up either.

“Oh, um, okay!” Blessedly, Emily doesn’t push the subject any further. All she does is spread her wings out, preparing for her departure. “We’ll just leave you to it, then. Good night!”

“See you tomorrow, Lucifer, Alastor.” Sera looks at each of them as she says their names, but Alastor gives a scoff in response, cold as always. She narrows her eyes at him - Alastor smiles back tensely - and they pointedly turn away from each other.

“Good night.” Lucifer says on their behalf. Sera gives one last distasteful glance at Alastor, before walking away. With a flap of their wings, Emily and Sera disappear from the building, leaving the two of them behind.

Alone with each other.

And their separate rooms.

Which is whatever, it’s *fine,* they usually sleep on opposite ends of the hotel anyway, so why would tonight be any different?

Lucifer places his hand on his doorknob,

(Alastor does as well),

and they stare at each other tentatively. Alastor looks like he has something to say, right at the tip of his tongue…

But he keeps quiet.

“Well.” Lucifer pushes his door open. “See you.”

Alastor gazes at him, his eyes relentless, yet inscrutable. He’s being purposefully cryptic again, a little on edge when he finally says,

“Farewell, for now.”

They enter their respective rooms, and shut the door.

After waiting for what feels like hours upon hours, Lute finally spots the two seraphims exiting from the lavish hotel. Emily bids Sera adieu, before walking onto the pavilion by herself.

Truthfully, Lute's been biding her time, trying to figure out how to speak to Emily without anyone else present. And it looks like that opportunity is *now*. She flies over as quickly as possible, landing beside her in one fell swoop.

"Oh, Lute!" Emily says enthusiastically. If she's surprised to see her, she doesn't show it. "How are you?"

They continue strolling together, and the street lamps light their path with a warm golden glow. Lute weighs over her options, wanting to pry without eliciting too much suspicion.

"You're up late, your highness." She forces her tone to be as conversational as possible. "Something wrong?"

"No, I was just escorting Lucifer and his friends up. They're staying over there tonight."

Emily gestures back towards the multi-levelled hotel, and Lute looks over in that direction, pretending to be surprised by this.

"Are they all in one room?"

"Oh gosh, no. That wouldn't be very comfortable." Emily shakes her head. "Charlie and Vaggie are staying in a room together, Niffty is in her own… that one is for Alastor, and that one is for Lucifer."

She points at a different balcony when she says each person's names, so it's easy for Lute to determine where Lucifer is located. Although, one piece of information momentarily distracts her.

"Niffty?" Lute scrunches her eyebrows together. Fuck. She hadn't expected for her to come back. "She's here?"

"Yeah! She's such a sweetie."

"Sweet?" She balks at this. It's not really a descriptor that she would use for that little devil, but to each their own.

They reach the end of the path, and they both cease to walk, turning to face each other. The streetlamp flickers a little, casting eerie shadows across Emily's face.

"I'm heading home now. What about you?"

Lute blinks, a little caught off-guard by her question. "Me?"

"Yes." Emily leans in, and fixes her with a scrutinizing stare. "Will you be patrolling the premises?"

Her azure-blue eyes pierce through her, like she *knows* that something is up, that Lute is about to do something…

But Emily doesn't try to stop her. Lute straightens her back, and gives her a respectful nod.

"Always. Leave it to me, your highness."

Emily shoots her one last smile, before flying into the horizon. As she watches her disappearing figure, Lute runs a hand through her hair, pondering over her next step.

I'll have to find some way to enter Lucifer's room, undetected.

Lucifer can't sleep.

He rubs his eyes before throwing his blanket off, and he gets up from his bed. He's always had a mild case of insomnia to begin with, but coupled with the fact that it's a brand new place…

Might as well explore my room more, Lucifer thinks. He opens up the ivory closet, and rifles through the neatly-folded garments. Emily did state that she provided them with some new clothes - but most of the designs are far too evocative of his past, and he quickly shoves them into the corner.

His hand touches something smooth; when he pulls it out, he finds that it's a white silk night-robe.

(Kind of looks like the one Alastor gave him.)

He pulls it on, but doesn't bother cinching it, so it billows out behind him with every step he takes. He inspects the room's interior - his marble washroom with the giant bathtub, the living room with its matching gold furniture - before looking outside his window.

The moonlight streams in, a cold shade of blue, and he glances up at the sky. Finds himself wondering if Alastor's asleep, because he kind of wants to bother him, now.

It's fine. I'm fine! Lucifer pushes the French patio doors open, and makes his way onto the balcony. *I'll just stay out here until I get tired.*

And so he gazes up at the moon, reminiscing about how the *one* time he fell asleep instantly, was when he and Alastor shared a bed.

Alastor can't sleep.

He paces around his room, and observes his surroundings carefully. It's quite spacious, and markedly nicer than his actual bedroom, but…

For the past few weeks, it's been a struggle to sleep ~~without Lucifer.~~

And how utterly ridiculous is that? They've really only spent the one night together, so how could he experience such difficulty afterwards?

He stares out his window, reflecting on that particular evening. Holding Lucifer, and being held; the feel of his bare legs, intertwined with his.

Never mind all that, Alastor thinks, exasperated. When Emily had suggested that the two of them share a room, it had been a little too much to agree to at the moment.

~~He really should have taken her up on that offer.~~

His mind is far too noisy to slumber, so Alastor gives up on it entirely, choosing to stroll onto the balcony instead. He rests his arms on the railing and gazes up, staring directly at the pale moon. It's so large and bright, it washes everything in a cerulean glow.

The moon looked quite similar to this, when he had confessed his feelings to Lucifer.

"You alone tonight?"

He's too wrapped up in his thoughts to recognize the voice. Surely it's not directed at *him,* is it? Alastor looks down, but the tall trees obscure the view of the road underneath, and he's unable to peer through the leaves. He turns his head to the side, trying to find the source-

only to realize that it's from Lucifer, who's standing on the balcony beside him. He has a grin on his face, and he's dressed entirely in white, his pale robe fluttering around him. Somehow, with the moonlight shining upon his figure, it gives him the effect of looking particularly angelic.

Alastor leans against the banister, rather amused by his antics. “I suppose I am.”

“Really?” Lucifer rests his chin on his hand. “You shouldn’t be. Because…”

And then he lets out a wolf-whistle,

fwit-

fwoo,

a two-tone melody, and Alastor almost laughs at this. The idea of his own partner, flagrantly hitting on him in the middle of the night, is far too outrageous.

“You are the world’s biggest idiot.” He deadpans.

“Maybe. But you’re the one dating me, so who’s the idiot now?”

Alastor actually lets out a snort this time, Lucifer smiles wider at his response, and they shuffle a little closer to each other. Still standing on separate balconies. So close, yet so far.

Lucifer drums his fingers on the railing, before gesturing towards the moon. “You’re moon gazing again, huh?”

“So are you.”

“You sure like that thing.”

“Well.” Alastor pauses, before tilting his chin up at the sky. “It reminds me of you.”

His words are met with silence.

Lucifer just stands there quietly, and suddenly, Alastor doesn’t really want to see his expression. He feels a little discomfited by his own disclosure, his palms uncharacteristically clammy, and he studiously pretends to be looking at the moon.

Like it’s so absorbing, he can’t look away.

And after what feels like a millennia has passed, Lucifer says softly:

“I think about you too.”

Alastor finally turns to him, noting that Lucifer has his hand covering his eyes, like he’s embarrassed. A flush had developed high on his cheekbones, and Alastor can feel his own face start to heat up when he sees it.

He dips his head down, not wanting Lucifer to notice his blush. “Well! What is his royal highness doing up so late? Besides hitting on his subjects, of course. How improper.”

“I wouldn’t flirt with anyone else!” Lucifer says indignantly. His voice is back to normal, full of haughty resentment. “Well, what are *you* doing up?”

“I believe I asked you first.”

“So? I asked you now.”

“Etiquette deems that *you* should answer first.”

“You tell me.”

“You go ahead.”

“You go ahead.”

Alastor lets out a growl, and runs his hand through his hair. They’ll argue all night, at this rate - which he does enjoy, but…

He peeks at Lucifer’s room, watching the way the curtains billow enticingly. Lucifer follows his gaze, and tilts his head to the side.

“Can’t sleep?” He asks.

“Not particularly.” Alastor concedes. “And you?”

“Me neither.”

There’s an unspoken invitation in the silence.

Alastor feels that incessant pull towards Lucifer, always present, never gone, and with one smooth motion he leaps over to Lucifer’s balcony.

The breeze gently ruffles their clothes, Lucifer’s robe dances in the wind, and Alastor stands atop of the golden railing. He crouches down, still perfectly balanced on the balcony railing, and Lucifer looks at him with a whisper of a smile on his face.

He brushes Lucifer’s hair out of his eyes, gently tucking a flaxen strand behind one ear. Hand lingering.

Not quite wanting to let go.

Lucifer slowly brings his arm up, and delicately clasps his hand around Alastor’s wrist. His touch is so careful, it’s barely perceptible, but his skin tingles at that point of contact.

They’re quiet. Very quiet. And Lucifer keeps his grip on him and Alastor’s fingers twitch in the air, unsure if he should come closer or take a step back or do both simultaneously, somehow, somewhere, someday.

So Lucifer makes the decision for him, and says:

“Come to bed with me.”

Chapter End Notes

I actually went back and edited my chapters up until ch. 17! You can go and take a look if you want. If there are any typos I'd appreciate if you could tell me. We're in Act 8: Heaven / Super Public and Very Obvious Flirting

Fun Facts:
- Alastor's always been a litttllleeee distracted by his nipples (ch. 32)
- Alastor has liked his full demon form since (ch. 11)
- He's liked his wings since (ch. 4) and that's the second feather he's taken! The first one is a red one from (ch. 18)
- The cherry stem knot is from (ch. 15)
- He called Alastor "Al" for the 1st time in (ch. 37)
- Lucifer saved Husk from getting killed in (ch. 33)
- They had a group hug in (ch. 26)
- Niffty's cherub disguise is from (ch. 18)
- Sera helped Lucifer make a song for Alastor in (ch. 25)
- Lucifer asked Emily to keep his relationship with Alastor a secret in (ch. 26)
- List of romantic spots in Heaven is from (ch. 26)
- They had a sleepover in (ch. 35/36)
- Lucifer having trouble sleeping is from (ch. 3)

Thank you for voting via your comments + my social media polls! The (staggering) majority wants an 18+ spin-off, so I'll prepare an outline for it. Release date pending. Which means that OSAS will forever be in the T+ fic rating, so I won't be changing it!

I actually have 2 QUESTIONS for you:
1. Do you have any title suggestions for the spin-off fic? It can't just be OSAS part two;;
2. What do you think Lute wants from Lucifer? Let me know in the comments! See you on Friday, Dec. 27!

The Calm Before

Chapter Summary

Previously on OSAS:
- Alastor helps Lucifer preen his feathers
- Huskerdust spends the night together
- They all stay at a hotel in Heaven
- Lute is looking for Lucifer
- Radioapple meets in the middle of the night, on the balcony

Chapter Notes

CH. 42 FANART:
- drawn by @dirtgrubber: 1 + 2
- drawn by @0-cloud-puff-0: 1 + 2
- drawn by @myntesuniverse: 1 + 2
- drawn by: @estigiak.bsky.social
- drawn by: @dragoonking25
- OSAS memes! 1 + 2

Extra-long chapter today, have fun! I made outfit refs, if you'd like to see what they're wearing: X + Tumblr + Bluesky

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Well, well." Alastor lets out a low chuckle. "Are you ordering me to join your bed tonight?"

Without missing a beat, Lucifer says:

"You know you want to."

Alastor does a sharp intake of breath, and Lucifer lets go of his wrist, his arm dropping to his side. It's -

~~It's accurate.~~

Alastor doesn't bother responding, but he steps off from the railing and lands beside him. They stare at each other, both waiting for a sign. Waiting, and waiting, and…

…so…

Alastor lifts up a hand, and gently runs his fingers down the curve of Lucifer's spine. His hand slides downwards until he reaches the small of Lucifer's back; Alastor forces himself to stop there, holding him as delicately as possible.

"Shall we?" He says, tone blithe. Lucifer leans a little into his touch, silently consenting, and together they make their way into the bedroom.

It's a large suite - *much grander than the room they gave me,* Alastor notes, a little miffed - and it takes a while for them to reach the king-sized bed. Once they do, Lucifer turns to face him.

"Which side do you want?"

"Hmm?"

"The bed." Lucifer gestures towards it. "You didn't have a preference last time. But what about now?"

He deliberates over the choices. Truthfully, it doesn't matter much to him, so he points towards the right. "Perhaps this side. You enjoy sleeping on the left, don't you?"

Lucifer's eyes widen, before smiling goofily. "So, what. Just because of that, you'll be on the right from now on?"

Yes. Maybe. Potentially. All possible replies, but Alastor leans down, purposefully getting into his personal space.

"If that is what you want, I do require something in exchange."

"What the - you're gonna make a deal?" Lucifer lets out a groan. "What?"

"Oh, nothing much."

"It's never *nothing* with you."

"Don't you get tired of protesting all the time?" Alastor settles down on the right side, and he pats the bed, indicating for Lucifer to come in. "I will demonstrate what I need from you."

Lucifer's gaze nervously flits between him and the bed, and Alastor's mouth twists into a teasing smirk. "You really ought to clean up your thoughts."

"No, WHAT! I-" Lucifer's face turns pink from embarrassment, and he runs a hand through his hair, thoroughly messing it up. "Oh, fuck it."

He slides in on the left side, and they lie there, facing each other. Just a few centimetres of linen sheets, separating them from one another.

So Alastor grabs him by his shirt, and pulls Lucifer right into an embrace.

He lets out a small squeak, head smushed against Alastor's chest. Lucifer's lithe body fits perfectly against his, and Alastor takes the opportunity to bury his face into his fluffy blonde hair.

"You'll remain here for the rest of our sleep." He mumbles, already feeling lightheaded from fatigue. "And you won't say another word."

Lucifer does keep quiet, his breathing even. Relaxed. Soft.

And listening to him makes Alastor drift into slumber.

Lucifer is awoken by an incessant

scrtch-krrrrrkkkk

sound, right at his balcony.

He opens his eyes groggily, and blinks a few times to adjust to the darkness. The mysterious sound continues outside, akin to leaves rustling.

Or…

Is it more like… a climbing noise?

"Hey," Lucifer whispers, looking over at Alastor, "do you hear tha-"

All words die in his throat when he sees Alastor, because-

It's just-

Alastor isn't smiling.

WHAT-

HOW-

WHY-

WHAT?!

Lucifer's thoughts fly by at the speed of light, and all he can do is stare at him in silence. In the time that they've known each other, Alastor has smiled in perpetuity, regardless of his mood - anger, irritation, sadness.

Yet today, he has a relaxed expression on his face, lips parted slightly, eyes closed. Lucifer experimentally touches his cheek, and Alastor stirs at the contact, still not smiling.

"Whatisit." He mumbles, clearly half-asleep. For some reason, Lucifer had completely forgotten why he woke him up in the first place, and all he can do is point at his own mouth.

"You're… not smiling."

"Nonsense." He mutters.

And then Alastor bolts up into a seated position, his red eyes wide with shock. He slaps his hand over his face, touching his mouth hurriedly, like he's double-checking.

"I… hmm." His eyes dart from left to right, and Lucifer can practically feel his anxiety in the air. He reaches a hand out, wanting to alleviate Alastor's worries, but another scratching noise comes from the balcony.

Ominous.

(Very, very ominous.)

Lucifer points to the direction of the sound instead, and mouths,

There's someone outside.

Alastor slowly drops his hand down, mouthing back:

Is that so?

His smile has returned to his face, albeit a little unsurely. It almost feels like Lucifer hallucinated the whole thing, but Alastor's deer ears are flat on his head, betraying his discomfort.

Probably shouldn't grill him about it, then. Lucifer merely gets off from the bed to investigate the noise, and a few seconds later, he can hear Alastor's soft footsteps shuffling after him.

The two of them return to the balcony, and it's still quite dark outside, although the sun is just starting to peek over the horizon. Lucifer examines their surroundings carefully. Nothing is awry with the balcony, except-

Lute?

She's hoisting herself over the railing, but she freezes once they make eye contact. The atmosphere is painfully heavy as they look at each other; he hasn't seen her since Sera

brought him to Heaven, so he has no idea where they stand with each other.

“So this *is* your room.” Lute lets out a sigh of relief, and Alastor moves first, throwing his arm in front of Lucifer protectively.

“And what business do you have with him?”

His mere presence seems to trigger Lute’s fight-or-flight instinct, as she bares her teeth angrily. “I’m not going to tell you shit. I’m only here to speak with the king.”

“You are in no condition to be making demands.” Alastor responds coldly. “Explain why you’re here, or I shall rip off your other arm.”

“I’d like to see you try, hellspawn.” Lute brandishes her angelic weapon, and Lucifer can feel Alastor’s animosity spiking with every passing second. None of this is conducive for a conversation, and he *is* a bit curious as to why Lute snuck over to come see him.

So he places a hand on Alastor’s arm, squeezing reassuringly. “You worried about me?”

Alastor looks down at where he’s touching him, before flicking his eyes back up. “Well. Considering that you are so susceptible to injury-”

“That was one time.”

“Once too many, I would say.”

“Alright, what about this. I’m the King of Hell, remember?”

Lucifer purposefully flexes his biceps in a cartoonish manner, hoping to make him laugh. It works - Alastor lets out a snort, and his eyes dance with amusement.

“Ah, yes. Very tough, your majesty. I’m shaking.” He grabs onto Lucifer’s arm, and inspects it carefully. “Unfortunately, I doubt your flimsy arms can do much damage.”

“If you’re gonna talk shit, then arm-wrestle me, bitch.”

“Gladly.” Alastor sneers. “How many rounds?”

“Best two out of three?”

“Enough.” Lute cuts in, looking visibly exasperated. “Are we going to talk or not, sir?”

“Oh! Yeah. Right.” He peeks over at Alastor, checking to see if he’s comfortable with the idea. His expression is a little displeased, but he does let go of Lucifer’s arm.

“I don’t see much merit in speaking with this angelic creature. But if that is what you wish, then do as necessary.”

“Just stay out of my way, demon.” Lute grinds this out of her teeth. They glare at each other, and Lucifer half-expects them to break out into a full on duel.

But Alastor, as per his M.O, does something completely unexpected - he merely hops over the railing to return to his own balcony. In one-two-three steps, he disappears into his room, and Lucifer watches his retreating back a little forlornly.

Once Alastor is officially gone, Lucifer turns to face Lute.

“Okay. Let’s go.”

Lute takes the two of them to a secluded clearing, where there’s nary a soul in sight. The green glade is surrounded by tall trees, and they stand across from each other, both with their guards up.

More importantly: it’s immensely uncomfortable.

Fuck.

They’ve never had to communicate with each other casually before, so Lucifer has no idea what to even say to her. *How are you? What’s new in Heaven? Do you hate me, or are we cool?*

Blessedly, Lute speaks first.

“You two are still sickeningly gross.”

Lucifer blinks at this. He hadn’t expected her to open with that. “Uh, sorry?”

“You and that sinner, ugh.” She mimes a retching motion. “You’re either fighting, or flirting. And I’m always sitting at the front-seat.”

“That’s - that is-” He stammers, a bit mortified. “You didn’t come to ask me about this, right?”

“No.” Lute lets out a resigned sigh. “I’ll be frank. I want to come clean about Niffty.”

Another surprise topic. Lucifer tilts his head, wracking his brain on how to talk about it discreetly.

“Niffty? You mean when you…” he lowers his voice surreptitiously, “took her on a… day trip?”

The corners of her lips quirk up, just a bit. “I guess that’s one way to put it. Truthfully, I’ve had some time to think about it, and the only way for me to move on from this whole fuck-up is if I tell Sera.”

She hesitates, before continuing. “I’ve been feeling… remorseful. Which feels like shit.”

“You have?” Lucifer can’t help but beam at this. “That’s great!”

“Sir. Did you not hear the part where I said it feels like shit?”

“I mean - so you’re going to take my advice?”

The last time he was in Heaven, he had suggested for Lute to own up to her mistakes. It hadn’t felt right for him to snitch on her, even if she had done some questionable things.

“You could say that.” She says, her tone clipped. “But I came to look for you, for one thing only.”

“Which is?”

“That… well, you fell from Heaven.”

“Rub salt in my wound, why don’t you.”

She ignores his interruption. “And that means it could happen to me. I’d like to prevent that.”

If the atmosphere was uncomfortable before, it’s downright excruciating now, and Lucifer wraps his robe a little tighter around himself. His fall from Heaven had occurred eons ago; it no longer stung when he thought about it, but it had been a terrible experience, to put it lightly.

“You want to prevent it?” Lucifer says at last. “I don’t think you can, if it happens. But, y’know. *If* it happens.”

“Reassuring.”

“I just mean- if you’re sincerely sorry, and you’ve actually changed for the better, that could alter things for you.” Lucifer looks at her. “But uh, I don’t know you at all.”

“You give terrible pep talks. How you managed to tempt Eve is beyond me.” Lute says dryly. Lucifer rolls his eyes, and makes a motion to leave.

‘Well, if you're gonna be a dick about it-”

“Wait!” Lute frantically yanks his robe. “I - just wait, sir.”

He does stop in his tracks, and he turns to look at her. *Properly* look at her. She has dark shadows under her eyes, indicating her lack of sleep, and her face looks rather gaunt. Maybe she really has been worrying about this, all on her own.

“I don’t know what to do.” She lets out a sigh, and runs her hand through her hair. “This is all highly unorthodox for an angel. And I don’t think Sera would approve of my actions. The only possible outcome I can see is being sent down to Hell.”

She looks miserable at the prospect, so Lucifer claps a gentle hand on her shoulder, hoping that it’s soothing in some way. “You might not believe me, but Hell’s pretty good, all things considered.”

“It’s called Hell, sir.” Lute scoffs. Still, she doesn’t have much venom in her words. She seems more clear-headed now. Less angry.

“Think about it this way: you’d definitely be welcome at Charlie’s hotel. It’s kind of the best place in both realms! Annnnnnd, I know Niffty misses you.”

“Like I care. I hate her guts.” But she sounds more wistful than upset, and she averts her gaze. “Well, tha… thank…”

She seems to struggle getting the words out, and she lets out a deep sigh. “We should probably separate soon. It’s dawn, and I can’t get caught speaking with you. The seraphim explicitly told me not to, so I’d rather avoid further trouble with her.”

She points towards the tall sycamore trees, and Lucifer looks over, watching as the sun starts to rise. The golden rays cast dappled shadows through the trees, and Lute looks softer in the light.

Perhaps that’s why he offers her an olive branch.

“We’re actually meeting in court today. You should present your case then.”

Lute glances at his hand, still on her shoulder, before looking at him. “Really?”

“Yeah. Maybe you’ll get a lighter sentence if there are witnesses for your case.”

“Witnesses…” She ponders over this, before nodding. “Fine. I’ll see you then. In the meantime, don’t let Sera know.”

“Got it.”

He’s about to drop his arm, when Lute places her hand atop of his. Her expression is guilt-ridden. Repentant.

“I did have one more thing to say to you.”

“Er… what?” They’ve already talked about

1. his relationship and

2. Lute's misdemeanours, so what else could she possibly have to say to him?

She squeezes his hand, and the action is strangely sorrowful. "I thought you were the world's biggest piece of shit. You had to be, right? Why else would you be banished?"

"Uh-huh." Lucifer can't help but feel a little insulted.

"But… you're…" Her voice wavers. "You really are such a dreamer. Like the tales say. So, I'm sorry."

Lucifer gapes at her, unsure how to process this information. *Did Lute just… apologize to me? How is that even- maybe she really has changed-*

"What is this?"

A stern voice interjects, and they both lurch away from each other, dropping their hands. Lucifer spins around, and he's face-to-face with Sera, her silver eyes wide with shock.

"Lucifer." Sera's tone is full of reproach. Extra eyes appear on her body as she strides towards them, and at her great height, she looms over the two of them menacingly.

"Sera!" Lucifer tries to laugh airily, but it sounds more strangled than anything else. She points an accusatory finger at him, eyes narrowed with suspicion.

"You're not cheating on Alastor, are you?"

For a moment, Lucifer is absolutely speechless.

And then he quickly realizes how incriminating this all looks - him wearing pyjamas, meeting Lute in a deserted area, caught with their hands on each other (? KIND OF).

They both talk at the same time:

"NO! No. Of course not-"

"I would never be caught with the likes of *him.**"

(*Lute says this so firmly, he actually feels a little offended by it.)

"Really." Sera sounds utterly unconvinced. "If that is the case, then explain to me why you're meeting so secretively."

Lute looks at him imploringly, clearly not ready to confess yet, and Lucifer quickly comes up with a half-truth.

"Lute here wanted to know more about Charlie's hotel. Right?"

Her eyes widen, but she hurriedly nods. "Yes. We met during my nightly patrol. And we started arguing about redemption. I told him that it's a fool's errand-"

“Hey!” Lucifer complains.

“- but he wanted to prove otherwise. So I’d like to hear how they’ll defend that stupid hotel. Please allow me to sit in during court, your highness.”

Sera looks at them both carefully. She’s silent for so long, Lucifer’s almost certain that she’ll deny the request, but something flickers in her expression.

“Alright.”

“That…” Lute furrows her eyebrows. “Really?”

“Yes. Now go before I change my mind, Lute.” Sera motions for her to leave, and Lute immediately flies away.

It’s just him and Sera now. Lucifer’s about to head back to his bedroom when she grabs his shoulder, her fingers digging in painfully.

“You are covering for her.” She states. “Why?”

Of course she figured it out, because how could anything go smoothly in his life?

“It’s not really my place to say. But! She does have something to tell you during the tribunal.” He tries for a smile here.

Which Sera doesn’t return. “Is it good news, or bad news?”

“I-” He shouldn’t lie, but he also shouldn’t make things worse, so he speaks as cryptically as possible. “Just, well… she’s… trying her best. So I hope you’ll at least hear her out.”

Sera looks at him, and sighs unhappily. It’s a deep, mournful sound, and her words are seeped with melancholy.

“Nothing is ever easy with you, is it.”

“…Sera?” He says unsurely. Lucifer tries to place his hand over hers, wanting to put her mind at ease- like how he had encouraged Lute.

But she lets go like he burns.

He grasps at nothing but air.

And she leaves without saying goodbye.

Sera flies through the promenade, attempting to calm herself down. What in the world is happening? Lute's acting strange. Lucifer is full of riddles. And now that the princess is here, there must be some sort of update with the hotel.

If redemption really is possible… what would that mean for Heaven?

She clasps her hands together, and gazes up at the sky in prayer.

Please. Let this all just be me overthinking. Or I'll be forced to do something drastic.

It's officially dawn.

And Alastor is hiding in his bedroom, mind racing, because the impossible had happened.

How could I let my smile slip? He thinks, pacing restlessly. *I have never once dropped my guard in Hell, even during my sleep. This… this is…*

He lets out a snarl, deeply unsettled by his actions, but also powerless to stop it from happening. Alastor had long since given in to Lucifer, already aware that he's the sole exception to everything in his life.

(And it's the only time that a loss of control fills him with excitement, as opposed to dread.)

Alastor touches his face, making sure that his smile is back. Thankfully, it's plastered on as always, and he lets out a sigh of relief. At least he can still control it when he's awake.

"Morning."

Alastor jumps at the greeting, and when he spins around, he catches sight of Lucifer, who had sneakily teleported into his room.

“Scared you again!” He laughs uproariously. “Looks like you need to raise your guard a little, huh?”

“Oh, fuck you.” Alastor retorts instinctively, but truthfully, he’s a little distracted by what Lucifer’s wearing. He’s dressed in a white tailored overcoat, with a gold crown on his head instead of his usual hat.

“Did the little seraphim provide you with these clothes?” Alastor pokes the crown curiously. Lucifer waves his hand away, which only makes him tap it harder.

“Yes - Emily did - QUIT THAT!”

Alastor raises both hands in his air, as though surrendering. He gives Lucifer another once-over; he had personally worn his usual attire, uninterested in whatever garments Heaven has supplied. But if Lucifer is wearing it…

“One moment.” He rifles through his closet, and pulls out a few items of clothing. After he’s certain that they’re the same design that Lucifer has on, he snaps his fingers to change his outfit.

And satisfyingly, Lucifer’s jaw drops at the sight. He reaches over to touch Alastor’s inky ruffled shirt, before moving to grasp his white jacket lapels.

“Woah! You’re wearing white? That's rare.” And then he smiles mischievously. “But I bet you’re just trying to match with me again.”

He continues to examine his clothes, and as he moves, the crown glints prettily under the sun. Alastor carefully places his hands on Lucifer’s shoulders, feeling the sharpness of his body under his palms.

“You do realize I did not make these.” He hesitates, before confessing. “Although, I suppose one could say that it’s a… happy coincidence.”

Lucifer beams, pure joy radiating out like sunlight. And Alastor wants to lean down and kiss him, wants to take him in, *all of him,* but.

All he does is tighten his grip on Lucifer’s shoulders. “So those seraphims provided you with a crown, and a much larger suite. I fear that their favouritism is really showing.”

“This li’l thing?” Lucifer pulls the crown off of his head, and motions for Alastor to bend down. He tilts his head forward, and then Lucifer places the gold coronet between his deer ears. “There, you can have it. Now you look every bit like the picture of royalty.”

Alastor touches the crown gently, a little surprised that he had bestowed it upon him. Lucifer smiles at him warmly, golden eyes crinkling, tender as can be.

And then Lucifer does an exaggerated bow, his voice taking on an affected tone. “Oh, your majesty! You have such BENEVOLENT grace and BOUNDLESS wisdom. Please, please, *please* show us peasants some mercy!”

Alastor barks out a laugh, and it's piercingly shrill in the air. The way that Lucifer effortlessly flips between 'charming' and 'stupid' should really be studied. "Your grovelling appeases me, commoner. Perhaps I won't throw you into the jail cellar tonight."

Lucifer joins in on his laughter, and their combined cackling echoes in the bedroom. It's all so very silly, truly ridiculous, but it's hard to stop laughing once they start.

Eventually, they both wind down, and Alastor turns to face the floor-length mirror. The crown shines under the light, and he leans in to inspect his reflection.

I suppose this is what I would look like, if I were his consort.

He glances over at Lucifer, who seems blissfully unaware of the implications. Alastor knows him quite well at this point - he must have handed him his crown thoughtlessly, just something that Lucifer believed would be fun.

(That man can really be so obtuse at times.)

Alastor straightens his back, and pushes the notion away. None of that matters at the present - he has more pressing matters to attend to.

"What did that awful angel want with you?" Alastor asks, trying to sound blasé. The second he utters that sentence, however, Lucifer's smile falters.

It takes him a while to respond, and when he does, Lucifer's voice is rather subdued. "She's… trying to make amends. She felt bad about the whole Niffty situation, so she'll join us in court, and let Sera know everything. But…"

He runs a hand through his hair, tousling his blonde locks into disarray. "Sera caught us talking, and she was so unhappy, and- I think she has the wrong idea. I… I might've ruined our relationship. Again."

Lucifer anxiously tugs at his hair, alternating between ruffling and smoothing it down. It seems to be an involuntary action, born out of stress.

Alastor hasn't seen him this crestfallen in a while. Lucifer used to suffer through bouts of woe, when they had first met. Seeing him look so dejected makes Alastor's heart clench, and he grabs onto Lucifer's wrist, stopping him from messing up his hair even further.

"But you will clarify it with her, won't you?"

Lucifer looks up at him, confused. "Huh?"

"You will explain yourself. She will understand." He lowers his voice, tone deadly serious. "And if she won't listen, I'll *make* her listen."

His threat lingers in the silence between them. Although Alastor greatly dislikes that seraphim, Lucifer seems to have (perplexingly) fond feelings towards her.

So he'll offer his assistance. He'll be damned if she exits out of Lucifer's life, once again.

Speaking of which, how dare she ruin Lucifer's day? Alastor thinks, deeply annoyed. He drops Lucifer's wrist and smiles brightly at him instead, all traces of malice gone.

"Once we're done with that pesky business, she will continue to act as our third wheel. There's always *someone* in our way, isn't there?"

Lucifer lets out a chuckle, and he can practically see the tension evaporating from his body. It's a much better look on him, and Alastor feels a tad more relieved. "I- sure, yeah. You're right. I'll clear it up with her."

"Good." Alastor pauses, and conjures up some red hair pins. "Now, you ought to tidy up. You look like a mess."

Without waiting for an answer, he slides them into Lucifer's hair, fashioning them into an X-shape, as per usual. He can feel Lucifer looking at him intensely, and once he's certain his blonde bangs are securely in place, Alastor drops his arm to his side.

Then Lucifer grabs him, and pulls him down for a kiss.

Such a perfect sensation - but when is it not? - and he immediately cups his hands on Lucifer's cheeks, leaning into the kiss eagerly. He can feel Lucifer tightening his grip on his shirt; the addictive way his mouth moves against his; they stumble across the floor, fumbling until Alastor's back hits against the wall.

At the impact, Alastor breaks the kiss, and glances down.

Where he's hit with the fascinating realization that Lucifer has to tiptoe to kiss him. Even with his heeled boots, he can't reach very far, and Alastor guffaws at the sight.

"What's so funny?" Lucifer asks, bewildered.

"HAH!" He points down towards their shoes, still cackling. "It appears that you are far too short to reach me. How unsightly-"

He's interrupted when Lucifer kicks him, his pointy boot making the pain even worse. It hurts so bad Alastor gasps, buckles over, and Lucifer takes the opportunity to kiss him on the mouth.

"There! Kissed ya without tip-toeing." He has a shit-eating grin on his face, and Alastor glares at him, still cradling his hurt leg.

"You - *Lucifer!"*

He punches Lucifer right in the stomach-

He smacks Alastor's face-

They start wrestling on the ground, rolling out of the bedroom, into the hallway-

-and right where Charlie and Vaggie are standing. They both look down at the two of them disapprovingly, and Lucifer quickly gets up, hitting Alastor's nose in his haste.

"Heeeeeeey, Char-Char."

"Don't 'Char-Char' me, dad. You shouldn't be fighting here." Charlie admonishes him. Lucifer has a sheepish expression on his face, but then he brightens up.

"Woah! You both look beautiful. Are you wearing Emily's outfits?"

Charlie has on a white dress, whereas Vaggie's wearing a sleek bodysuit. She takes the chance to twirl Vaggie in place, showing her off proudly, and Lucifer gives a supportive round of applause.

"Yep! Emily's so good at designing, right?" She smiles at him, all traces of reproach gone; she's never been able to stay angry for long. "But never mind us. Look at you two, in your matching couple outfit, aw!"

Alastor feels vaguely like he's being doted on, which is rather uncomfortable; he really only enjoys it ~~when Lucifer does it~~

so he switches the conversation.

"Did you require something from us?"

"Just wanted to tell you that our court meeting is at 1 pm! Here, you can take this to keep the time." Charlie pulls out a gold pocket-watch and offers it to Lucifer, who slips it into his coat. "Let's separate to explore Heaven, and we'll just meet up in court. Vaggie, we should go get Niffty."

Vaggie nods, and Charlie offers them a wave good-bye.

"See you later then, dad, other da- *Alastor!* HAAAAAH! Don't know why I said that!" Charlie rambles on nervously, and before he can fully register her words, she hurries down the hallway with Vaggie.

(So Charlie causes an awkward situation, and escapes instead of resolving it. Superb.)

Lucifer clears his throat, and Alastor turns to look at him. He clearly heard Charlie as well, based on the slight flush on his cheeks, but Lucifer chooses to brush it under the rug.

"So, uh. Where d'you wanna go now?"

"In Heaven?" Alastor taps his finger on his chin thoughtfully. He doesn't have an interest in anything besides the ice cream parlour, but they did have time to kill. "Well. Emily gave us a list, did she not?"

Lucifer materializes the page out from nowhere, and examines the list carefully. He starts snickering - not a good sign - before handing it over to Alastor.

“Yeah, I don’t think you wanna do any of this.”

Alastor accepts it gingerly, and he feels almost sick as he reads the list aloud:

“Pegasus riding? An enchanted blanket fort? A *couple’s massage?”*

Alastor immediately burns the paper up in his hands, the fire licking it up in one go, and Lucifer practically doubles over with laughter.

“I told you you’d hate it!” He wipes a tear away from his eye, still grinning. “Wanna do something else?”

“Anything is better than *that.”* Alastor glances at him. “What did you have in mind?”

“They mentioned they had training grounds last time. Let’s go there and fight.”

His deer ears perk up at the suggestion.

“Vaggie, take a picture for me!” Charlie squeals. She has a fluffy koala in her hands, and she's cradling it against her sternum.

“Looking good, babe.” Vaggie says, snapping a few photos for her. “They have a phoenix over there, if you want to take a photo with it.”

“Do they?! Say no more!”

The three of them are at the petting zoo, where an assortment of beautiful creatures lounge about. The last time Charlie came here, Vaggie sadly didn’t tag along, and so she wanted to experience it together this time.

Charlie carefully places the koala down onto a eucalyptus tree. “C’mon, I want to see the phoenix! Niffty - Niffty?”

“Here!” Niffty says cheerfully. She’s standing with a cherub, and she’s currently shaking him down aggressively. “I’m just gonna get some money from him, and then we can go.”

“You’re *robbing* him?” Vaggie says, appalled.

“We need money!”

“Nooooo, no we don’t.” Charlie hurriedly tugs Niffty off, and gives the cherub an apologetic look. “I’m so sorry, sir.”

“Oh, that’s okay.” He says good-naturedly. He tosses Niffty a gold coin, before heading off. “Buy yourself a churro or something!”

“Thanks, sir!” Niffty wipes the coin with a handkerchief, and then lifts it up in the air appreciatively. “Solid gold. And now it’s nice and clean!”

“Okay, but that’s the last time you bother someone today.” Charlie places Niffty on her shoulders, and the three of them make their way down the petting zoo.

Vaggie holds onto her hand, and they visit the rest of the animals - some mythical, some existent, but all of them extremely friendly. After a duration of petting creatures and taking pictures, Vaggie touches her arm gently.

“Charlie. How do you feel about the upcoming court session?”

Her shoulders sag at the question.

“Not great.” She replies truthfully. “I just… I know my hotel works. I know redemption is possible. And I know that people can and will change for the better. But…”

She looks at the oversized rabbit in the flower field (apparently it’s a Flemish Giant Rabbit, based on the label text), and she touches its head tenderly. “I feel like Heaven prioritizes harmony.”

“Harmony?” Vaggie echoes.

“Like, they look at the big picture.” Charlie continues. “They care about the needs of the collective, instead of the individual. You know, for example… do you kill one person, to save a hundred? I think they would.”

They stare off into the distance, contemplating. And then she grins at Vaggie.

“But I have irrefutable evidence, and months of data, and a presentation, and examples, and most importantly…” Charlie sweeps Vaggie’s hands into her own. “I have you.”

“Oh, hon.” Vaggie smiles back, blushing prettily. “Of course I’ll be here. I love you.”

“I love you, too.”

“What about me?” Niffty pats Charlie’s head. “Do you two love me?”

“Yeah, yeah.” Vaggie says dismissively. “Now, go talk to a cherub or something.”

“Gladly!”

Niffty jumps off, running away, and Charlie leans forward to give Vaggie a kiss.

The training grounds are distinctive, even from afar. The architecture resembles the Roman colosseum, the limestone amphitheatre framing a large, well-built arena. Alastor and Lucifer are standing right at the centre of the field, circling one another slowly.

“Ready to get your ass destroyed?” Lucifer jeers.

“Oh, I guarantee that you won’t be able to walk after this.” Alastor lets out a scoff. “So you needn’t hold back.”

“If I didn’t hold back, you’ll die.”

“Well! I’ll take my chances.”

Alastor beckons him forward, and that pretty much acts as the starting signal. They clash against each other, exchanging quick-quick-quick blows, and Lucifer waits for an opening - Alastor’s always been a little hasty, so he’ll definitely slip up-

NOW!

Lucifer sweeps his leg, and Alastor smacks right onto the ground.

“Watch your footing!” He says, all chipper. In a flash, Alastor grabs *his* ankle, and sends him sprawling across the floor.

“You should take your own advice.” Alastor’s eyes glint menacingly, and Lucifer leaps forward.

They continue fighting, the two of them both moving more cautiously this time. It’s getting harder to land another shot, and they’re at somewhat of a standstill:

If Lucifer punches, Alastor blocks;

If Alastor kicks, Lucifer dodges;

and the seconds of fighting turn into minutes turn into-

Alastor shoves Lucifer onto the ground, his large hand gripping tightly on his blonde hair. Lucifer's on his knees, chest pressed against the cement, back arched; and Alastor leans down, whispering into his ear:

"Looks like it's my victory."

Lucifer glares from underneath him. "I wouldn't count on it."

He harshly elbows Alastor in the abdomen - takes advantage of his momentary shock to flip him right off. In an instant, he forces Alastor onto his knees, and Lucifer stands in front of him triumphantly.

"There! My win."

Alastor grabs onto his legs for balance, and now he's at direct eye level with Lucifer's pant zipper. He can feel Alastor gripping harder onto his thighs, and he's suddenly hyperaware of Everything About Alastor.

The proximity. The angle. The way that he gazes at him, blood-red eyes framed with long eyelashes…

"Are you enjoying this?" Alastor says, voice a little rough. His radio filter flickers on and off, like he's unsure if he wants to use it, and Lucifer reaches his hand out, lowering it little by little,

until he places a finger underneath Alastor's chin, and forces him to look up at him.

"Yeah. You look good on your knees."

Alastor swallows, and Lucifer watches the motion as it goes down the column of his throat, the movement strangely hypnotizing. Alastor's nails dig in so hard, he almost draws blood from Lucifer's legs, but he barely even registers the pain.

"I told you." Lucifer says, his voice a little hoarse. "I'm taller than you when you're kneeling."

Alastor opens his mouth, face a little flushed, pupils dilated-

but then his deer ears twitch in the air. He looks around curiously, and then he narrows his eyes.

"I hear something."

"What?" Lucifer asks.

"The most dreadful sound in Heaven." Alastor lets out an annoyed groan. "The flapping of angel wings."

Right on cue, they hear a shrill whistle,

TWEET-TWEET!

And they look up at the sky. Lucifer lets out a grumble at the sight, because out of everyone, in the ENTIRE realm of Heaven, why did it have to be the two angels that guarded them last time?

“What the - are you serious?!” One of the angels yell. “We already told you that public indecency is banned in Heaven!”

“This- this isn’t what it looks like.” Lucifer says hurriedly. But then Alastor - *that fucking ass* - he slides his hands up higher on Lucifer’s thighs, clearly trying to piss off the angels even more.

“And what will you do about it?” Alastor cackles, not taking it seriously at all.

“We’ll arrest you.”

Lucifer blinks at this. “What?”

With lightning speed, the angels fly over and slap a single pair of handcuffs - one side on Lucifer, one on Alastor, essentially cuffing them to one another. Alastor jumps up from the ground and tugs at their shackles, but every time he moves, Lucifer’s arm moves with him.

“Remove this.” Alastor’s eyes turn into radio dials, his wrath evident, based on the increasing size of his shadow.

“No. We’ll take you to jail. We should have done this the last time.” The angel huffs. “You’re under arrest for desecrating holy ground, for-”

Lucifer grabs a pile of sand, and throws it in the angels’ eyes. “POCKET SAND!”

“OW! HEY!” The angels yelp, and try to rub the sand out. While they’re distracted, Lucifer grabs onto Alastor’s hand, their handcuffs connecting them together.

“C’mon, let’s make a run for it!”

Alastor nods, and the two of them dash out from an arch in the amphitheatre, running as fast as possible. The voices of the angels fade into nothing as they escape further, and they move through the promenade, the ice cream shop, the duck pond, the rose garden.

(All familiar sights from last time.)

They’ve been sprinting for a while when Alastor speaks, his voice smooth yet teasing.

“You’ve made us fugitives in Heaven. You really are such a bad influence, my king.”

Lucifer snaps his fingers, and the handcuffs disappear instantaneously. “There! We’re no longer fugitives.”

“You could have done that the whole time?” Alastor asks incredulously. Even so, they continue holding hands, the two of them darting through Heaven without a care.

“Well, duh.” Lucifer grins at him. “But anyway, you’re king for the day. You’ve got the crown, after all. What should we do now?”

“So you’re waiting for my decree.” Alastor thinks for a moment, before deciding. “What time is it?”

Lucifer pulls out the pocket watch, and curses when he sees the time. “Shit! We’re gonna be late for the meeting! I can’t run any faster, though.”

“Ah, yes. Your legs are far too short.”

“Wow. Thanks-”

Alastor suddenly scoops him up, one arm under Lucifer’s legs, one arm on his back. Alastor’s carrying him bridal-style, and Lucifer hurriedly loops his arm around his shoulders, leaning in close. He can feel Alastor’s steady heartbeat, *badump, badump, badump,* and Lucifer nestles in closer to listen to it better.

“We’ll be on time now.” Alastor says cheerfully. “Let’s pick up the pace, shall we?”

“Okay.” Lucifer mumbles. He doesn’t even care about making it on time anymore - but hey. Anything that’ll keep him in Alastor’s embrace is good with him.

And Alastor really does carry him the rest of the way.

Chapter End Notes

Shout-out to my reader who noticed that Ch. 14 was titled ‘The Moon’ and Ch. 41 was titled ‘The Moon (Reprise)’! Love when you pick up on my easter eggs! I went back and edited until ch. 24, let me know if there are typos please <3

Fun Facts:
- Lucifer prefers the left side of the bed from (ch. 35)
- The last time they saw Lute was from (ch. 26) and that’s when Lucifer gave her advice
- And Lute cut Lucifer’s hand by accident in (ch. 20)
- Lute’s always watched radioapple do couple-things in (ch. 20/26) lmao, the poor girl
- Lute kidnapped Niffty in (ch. 16)

- Sera told Lute to stay away from the Hazbin Hotel in (ch. 40)
- Lucifer and Alastor have been scaring each other, by popping out from nowhere since (ch. 2) and they always rotate who does it
- Matching radioapple outfits! In (ch. 10-11, ch. 37)
- The X-shaped red bobby pins are from (ch. 15, ch. 24-25, ch. 35)
- Last time Charlie said “matching best friend suits” in (ch. 37) and now she said matching couple outfit!
- Radioapple has always fought for fun (starting from ch. 6) and their first date was also a fight (ch. 32)
- Niffty has been bullying cherubs since (ch. 18)
- In (ch. 27), Alastor said: “Even if I grovelled at your feet, I would still be taller than you!” And Lucifer asked him to prove it by kneeling. So I brought it back here!
- Sera assigned them angel bodyguards last time in (ch. 18) and Alastor/Lucifer traumatized them by pretending to make out LOL
- BRIDAL CARRY! In (ch. 2) Lucifer carried Alastor, (ch. 8) Alastor carried Lucifer, (ch. 24) Lucifer carried Alastor, and now (ch. 41) Alastor carried Lucifer.

My QUESTION for you this time is: what do you think Sera will do? Next chapter is the very dramatic conclusion for the Heaven Arc, full of nail-biting tension! It will be on Friday, Jan. 10. See you then <3

The Tempest

Chapter Summary

Previously on OSAS:
-Alastor and Lucifer sleep in the same room
-Lute asks Lucifer for advice
-Sera and Lucifer have an argument
-Charlie, Vaggie and Niffty head to the zoo
-Alastor and Lucifer fight at the training grounds before going to court

Chapter Notes

CH. 43 FANART:
- drawn by: @dirtgrubber
- drawn by @myntesuniverse
- drawn by: @honkforquacks.bsky.social
- drawn by: @estigiak.bsky.social
- drawn by: @borderlinep16.bsky.social
Thank you always, you are all talented and wonderful <3 Find me on Tumblr, Twitter, and Bluesky

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE STARTING:
- Since the chapter title is named "The Tempest," I decided to write the first scene in the style of a play, just like "The Tempest" from Shakespeare!
- Also, the chapter titles are connected: Ch. 42 + 43 is one sentence, "The Calm Before the Tempest"

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Scene 1:

The courtroom in Heaven, void of people.
Enter Emily and Sera.

SERA, [looks around]: That's strange. I thought the Princess would be here by now.
EMILY: They should be here soon! I told them 1 pm.

Enter Charlie, Niffty, and Vaggie.

CHARLIE, [waves]: Hey guys! Hope you weren't waiting too long.
EMILY: Of course not! Did you have fun?
CHARLIE: It was absolutely wonderful! We went back to the zoo, and your animals are so cute! We have a petting zoo too, but the one in Hell is a little, well…
VAGGIE: Bad. It's bad.

Enter Alastor and Lucifer, clothes in disarray.

NIFFTY: Why are you two so messy?
LUCIFER: We were fighting at the training grounds. Annnd, I won!
ALASTOR, [sneers]: Lying now, are we? As we were interrupted by those angel guards, we have yet to decide the victor.
LUCIFER, [huffs]: You're a sore loser.
ALASTOR: Oh? Well, you are merely a loser.
LUCIFER: Then you're an ass.
ALASTOR: And you are a nightmare.

Enter Lute, sneaking in from the side.
(But she's not very slick.)

SERA: Ah, Lute. Please be seated.
LUTE: Yes, your highness.
VAGGIE: WOAH, what the hell is she doing here?
SERA: She's here to see the judgement of your hotel.
VAGGIE: We aren't a circus. Get out.
LUTE: You have no authority here, Vagina.
VAGGIE: Call me that one more time-
SERA: Enough. Order in the court.

All quiet down.
Lute sits far away from the others.

SERA: It appears that we are all present. So, without further ado, let's commence.

"Princess." Sera addresses her. "You may begin."

“Okay!” With a wave of her hand, Charlie summons up a stack of photographs. “As you know, we’ve spent a long time promoting for the Hazbin Hotel. It’s been a really, really, reaaaaalllyyyy slow process, but it totally paid off!”

She passes a photograph to Sera, who scans it curiously. It’s a group picture of all her new guests, standing in front of the hotel, and they all had to squeeze together to fit in the image.

“These are our current residents! Most of them are newcomers to Hell. Since they’re totally confused about the afterlife, we take them in, help them out, and prevent them from getting into contracts.”

“Aw, what a good idea!” Emily coos.

“It certainly is… a nice gesture.” Sera settles on saying. “But what makes this different from any other hotel? It seems like they’re just using your place for shelter.”

“I’ll explain how!” Charlie continues. “I can guarantee that their main goal is self-improvement. Which is the most important part, right? Last time we were here, Sera, you were rightfully concerned that they had bad motivations. What if all they cared about was escaping Hell, and getting up to Heaven?”

She passes over a few more photos of the hotel inhabitants, all engaging in various activities: laughing, chatting, and eating, to name a few. “So! I didn’t make any promises about leaving Hell this time. What I *did* say is that we can all hang out, enjoy some hobbies, and learn how to become better people. Together!”

“I see.” Sera places the picture down, still looking rather unconvinced. “And what sort of methods did you use for their improvement?”

“Great question. Allow me to show you some of our activities.” Charlie says cheerfully. For the next hour, she explains everything that the hotel has done, point-by-point:

A Trust exercises e.g. dance lesson
B Workshops on how to become a kinder person
C Exploring the city + places to avoid if you’d like to stay safe
D Working at the hotel (if they want to!)
E Getting more recruits after the Vee’s party

It’s months upon months of hard work, condensed into one presentation, and Charlie’s pleased by all the progress that they’ve achieved.

“Of course, growth is not linear. It’s been a few steps forward, and a few steps back. But I do have THIS!”

She pulls out a very detailed graph, containing all the data she’s meticulously documented. “Check it! I’ve been marking down every single person’s choices - you know, did they help out, did they share their food, did they say ‘please’ and ‘thank you,’ just every little thing that I could keep track of!”

“Woah, Charlie. This is amazing.” Emily accepts the page, and looks at her admiringly. “You really thought of everything.”

“Thanks, Em!” Charlie beams at her. It had been kind of a disaster the last time she tried to present her case in court, so she made sure to include as much evidence as possible. “As you can see, the data shows that it’s trending upwards. I can guarantee that they’ve all become kinder by coming to us, even if it’s only by a little bit.”

While Charlie’s wrapping up her presentation, she fails to notice that the smile on Sera’s face has slowly disappeared.

This is the worst possible outcome.

Sera clenches the photograph tighter in her hands; red-hot panic builds up within her, and she feels like a kettle placed on the stove, about to boil over. She wipes the sweat off her brow with a handkerchief, and Emily nudges her with her foot.

You okay? Emily mouths. Sera nods, and tries for a reassuring smile. Appeased, Emily turns away, focusing her attention back onto Charlie.

And Sera listens as well, but her budding anxiety causes her throat to close up, making it impossible for her to speak.

Finally,

finally,

finally,

Charlie slaps her last page down in front of the seraphims, which has the words **A HAPPY END!** in rainbow letters.

“So, in conclusion, most of them are doing their best and learning how to be kind, even down in Hell! So you see, redemption IS possible! People ARE capable of change!”

“Oh, wow! I knew it!” Emily gushes. “Sera, isn’t this great news?”

“Right?” Charlie takes a sip of water before looking over at Sera, waiting eagerly for her mandate.

But Sera…

doesn’t say a word.

In fact, her whole demeanour has shifted. Her eyes overflow with anxiety; her face is so pale, it practically takes on a deathlike pallor. Without saying another word, Sera, she…

She rises into the air, and flies right out the window.

And then there’s absolute silence for one second,

two,

three-

“Uh…” Lucifer looks around in confusion. “Is she coming back?”

“I… I think so?” Emily says unsurely. They all wait a little longer, but when it’s clear that Sera’s not coming back, she lets out a sigh. “Oh no. I guess she isn’t.”

“What - but she hasn’t even made a decision yet! She can’t just go!” Charlie cries out, agitation bubbling up within her. Is this how it ends? All her hard work, leading to nothing?

No. Not today.

“I’m gonna go find her!” Charlie decides, and without waiting for a response, she dashes out of the courtroom.

Since Sera escaped through the window, she's probably somewhere outside. Charlie hurries onto the balcony to look for her, and leans over the banister. Maybe she's in the city? By the beach? Near the mountains?

After some searching, Charlie flicks her gaze upwards, and she finally spots Sera in the sky. Her blue figure is recognizable even from afar, but she's rapidly disappearing over the horizon.

Think, Charlie, think. How do I get to her? Maybe with a portal, or…

"Charlie! Do you see her?" Her dad's voice pierces through the air, and when she turns to look at him, her eyes are immediately drawn to his outstretched wings.

And a lightbulb goes over her head.

"She's over there!" Charlie points to Sera in the distance. "Dad, do you think you can take me to her?"

She mimes out flying with her arms, and Lucifer nods immediately.

"Of course. C'mon, I'll hold you." He picks her up with one arm, carrying her like she's practically weightless. They're about to take off when she hears the sound of footsteps, accompanied by the tapping of a cane.

"Leaving already?"

Lucifer spins around with Charlie still in his arm, and they both stare at Alastor, who is leaning on his radio staff. Although his stance is exceedingly casual, there's a noticeable tension in his smile.

"Yeah." Lucifer replies on their behalf. "Gotta catch up to Sera."

"Ah." Alastor says, voice clipped. The tension in his smile increases. "Just you and Charlie, then?"

"We won't be long." Lucifer promises. "Maybe… give us a few minutes alone with her, yeah? You can come by after. I'm thinking it might be better with less people."

"I think so too." Charlie quickly agrees. "She seemed a little spooked. Alastor, can you tell Vaggie to wait for me to come back?"

"So you'd like me to act as your carrier pigeon. How insulting." Alastor says dryly. He neither agrees nor rejects, merely mulling it over. Lucifer reaches a hand towards him, but when he catches sight of Charlie's stare, he hastily drops his arm.

She averts her eyes, feeling weirdly like a third wheel. Whoops.

“I’ll be right back, okay?” Lucifer ends up saying. His voice drops to a softer decibel, tone so tender that Charlie *really* feels like she’s intruding now.

Alastor opens his mouth, looking like he’s about to argue, but he nods tersely instead. Once he receives Alastor’s blessing, Lucifer leaps up into the air, and the two of them race towards Sera.

It’s only been a few minutes, but it feels like an eternity has passed since Lucifer left.

Alastor paces back and forth in the courtroom, feeling the painful sting of regret. Perhaps he should have strong-armed his way into following him.

He listens attentively, trying to see if Lucifer will call for his name. Unfortunately, all he hears is Vaggie drumming her fingers on the tabletop,

click-clack-click-clack-click-clack-click-clack-click-clack-click-clack-click-clack-

Alastor slaps his radio cane on the table, and Vaggie jumps at his sudden action.

“What the fuck, Alastor?!”

“You ought to *stop that,* my dear.”

Although his tone is cordial, his every word comes out through gritted teeth. Thankfully, Vaggie does cease her movement.

Until she starts jiggling her leg instead, clearly antsy.

“You are being awfully annoying.” Alastor snaps, unable to hold back. He’s already at his wit’s end, dealing with the waiting, the incessant waiting, the godawful *waiting*-

“As if *you’re* any better, asswipe!” Vaggie yells back. “You’re just walking back and forth, over and over again - just sit the fuck down!”

“Ha-HA! And how is all that ‘sitting’ working out for you, hmm?”

They glower at each other, both seething with barely-concealed animosity. Eventually, he swivels away, wanting to get as far away from her as possible.

“Enough of this nonsense. I am going after them.”

“Alastor, don’t.” Vaggie says sternly. He bristles at this, and glares at her from the corner of his eye.

“And why not?”

“Charlie told us to stay. And besides, you’ll probably yell at Sera, right? Or challenge her to a fight? How’s that gonna look for our Hotel? ‘Sinners being redeemed’ my ass!”

Alastor feels his smile hanging by a thread. Vexingly, Vaggie had hit the nail on the head; he had fully intended on beating Sera into the ground, should the opportunity arise.

“Look. Just stay put.” Vaggie carries on. “Charlie will talk some sense into Sera, you’ll see.”

For some reason, that’s the final straw. Alastor whips his head to face her, hissing out,

“I don’t care what that seraphim does, all I care about is-”

Lucifer.

Alastor stops before he says his name, but he doesn’t need to. Vaggie’s eyes soften at this - just a little - and he doesn’t like her reaction. Not one bit.

He walks away instead, and shoves the doors open.

“You may stay here, if you wish. But I plan on making myself useful.”

“Alastor, you-”

The doors slam shut before he can hear the rest of her sentence.

Good riddance, regardless. Her nervous energy had been far too much to handle. Alastor walks towards an open window and surveys the skies, trying to locate Lucifer.

Give us a few minutes alone with her, yeah? You can come by after, Lucifer had said. Perhaps Alastor was taking him too literally, only waiting ‘a few minutes’, but he can’t handle it any longer.

I will just keep my distance, and intervene when necessary. Alastor thinks.

In his peripheral vision, Alastor catches sight of Lucifer’s red wings against the blue skies. He perks up at this, and immediately attempts to shift into shadow.

But of course - Heaven’s atmosphere suppressed his powers, so he can’t teleport around. The last time they were there, he was unable to do much, except.

Well.

He can still transform into his eldritch form, at least. He'll get to Lucifer much quicker this way.

"-absolute fucker!" Vaggie yells, but the doors close before Alastor can hear the insult. She lets out a haggard sigh, and sinks deeper into her chair.

Alastor, that jerk. Always running off and doing whatever the hell he wants. Although, seeing him fret over Lucifer made him seem almost…

Human.

Because she knows exactly how he feels.

Charlie, are you okay? Are you hurt?

"Are we going too?" Niffty asks. Vaggie jolts at her presence, forgetting that she was still there. She shoots her a (hopefully) confident smile.

"Maybe later. I don't want to ruin anything for Charlie."

"Okay! Let's go sit with the angels." Niffty points towards Emily and Lute, who have absconded to the other half of the room. They both look rather worried, whispering furtively to one another.

"I, uh…." Vaggie feels some reluctance at this. The thought of sitting with:

- Emily (why is she always so nice to Charlie, huh?) and
- Lute (just a bitch)

made Vaggie feel kind of nauseous. As if sensing their gaze, Lute glances over, and they lock eyes for a moment.

Lute has a pensive expression on her face. Neutral-slash-almost-kind, if one wanted to describe it.

And then Lute sticks her middle finger up at them.

Vaggie growls at this, and pointedly turns away. “No. We are *not* going over there.”

It takes a while before they locate Sera again; she’s been darting to and fro, like she’s unsure where to land.

“You got your eyes on her, Charlie?” Lucifer asks. They’re hurtling through the skies at a breakneck pace, and he’s trying his best to keep her safe in his arms.

“Yeah! She’s over there!” Charlie points over at the training grounds, and Lucifer catches sight of Sera’s back, right before she ventures deeper into the colosseum. “Don’t scare her, dad. Let’s enter through the bottom arches.”

“No problem.” They land at the entrance to the training grounds, and Lucifer places Charlie gently onto the ground. She smooths down her white dress, and flicks her hair back nervously.

“Dad. Do you…” She takes in a deep breath. “Do you think my hotel is a good idea?”

Lucifer blinks at this, a little confused. “Of course! Why are you asking me now?”

“I mean - you didn’t believe in me before.” She says uncertainly. “And now that Sera just left without a word, well… I don’t know-”

“Charlie.” He places both hands on her shoulders, interrupting her spiel. “You can do anything you put your mind to. And maybe I didn’t, uh, ‘agree’ with you before, but I’m completely on your side, okay? I’ll support you no matter what.”

“Really?”

“Really. So, you ready for this?”

Charlie breaks out into a smile. “As ready as I’ll ever be.”

“That’s my girl.”

And with that, they finally walk through the arches - knowing that what happens next will change their known universe, forever.

Sera doesn't look well.

Lucifer watches as she flies in frenzied circles within the colosseum. She's fully shifted into her angelic form, and a legion of eyeballs blink rapidly within her hair.

"Sera!" Lucifer calls out. As she snaps her head towards him, multiple silver eyes stare at his direction. "Can you come down?"

Sera hovers in the air unsurely, but she eventually lands onto the ground, her huge body towering over both him and Charlie.

"You shouldn't be here." Sera says tersely.

"In the training grounds?"

"No. *Here.* In this Heavenly realm." Her expression is stony, resembling every bit like a statue. "Please leave."

That one stings. Lucifer will admit it. They've been getting along so well, but he's forgotten that Sera can be domineering when she wants to.

"What's wrong?" Charlie, to her credit, doesn't back down. "I mean - weren't you supportive of our plan?"

"I was certainly curious about it." Sera replies. "And it was only strategic to monitor your progress. But seeing the results is- it's-"

She takes in a deep breath, before speaking through gritted teeth. "You're filling me with doubt. And I can't have that here. I need to maintain order. I need to be strong. So, as I said earlier: please leave."

She's grown so large that her wings block out the sunlight, drenching the two of them into dark shadow. The eyes in her hair glare threateningly at Lucifer, but he's not afraid. Not anymore.

No matter what happens - through the past, present and future - Sera will always be a part of his family.

“No.” Lucifer says firmly.

“No?” She echoes.

“I’m not leaving. Not until you explain yourself.”

“There is nothing to explain.”

“Bullshit.”

He reaches a hand out, but she jerks back at the motion. She’s been avoiding his touch lately, and he withdraws his arm, feeling even more confused.

“At least give us an answer. Make a decision!” Charlie pleads. Sera turns away, the eyes in her hair blinking even faster now.

“I - I can’t.”

Lucifer lets out a noise of disgruntlement, feeling frustrated by Sera’s uncooperativeness. The thing is, Charlie spent all this time working at the hotel, doing whatever she can to help as many people as possible.

Like hell he’s going to turn tail and give up - not when they’re this close to achieving Charlie’s dreams.

So he looks at Sera determinedly.

“We’re staying put until you decide.”

“Lucifer.” Sera admonishes. “I’m afraid it’s not that simple.”

“Really?” Lucifer says heatedly. “Then tell us why. You’re clearly stressed about something. Something you’re not telling us.”

“Lucifer, that’s not-” Sera tries to cut in, but he barrels onwards anyway.

“And I might not be able to fix everything-”

“Please, it’s-”

“And sure, I’ve fucked up so many times in the past-”

“You haven’t, you-”

“But at least let me fix whatever’s wrong, Sera-”

“You can’t *fix this,* Lucifer-”

“Just GIVE ME A CHANCE!”

“That’s ENOUGH!”

Sera throws her arm out, and everything unfolds in slow motion:

an arc of golden light shoots out from her palm,

Sera’s eyes widen, completely surprised,

Lucifer watches as it comes closer, feeling rooted to the spot,

and Alastor swoops in, just a blurry streak in the air, and he gets hit instead.

The world whirls back into regular speed, and he feels sick with horror, watching as Alastor drops onto the ground.

“ALASTOR!”

Lucifer desperately crawls towards him, and hurriedly pulls him onto his lap. Alastor’s clutching his abdomen tightly - fuck, did he get hurt there? *Again?* - and Lucifer cradles him within his arms.

“Lucifer.” He says quietly. It takes him a second, but he realizes that Alastor’s radio filter is completely gone. “Are you hurt?”

“Me? You got hit and you’re worried about *me?”* He wants to cry, but he doesn’t - not here, not now. “No, I’m not hurt, you fucking idiot.”

“Still insulting me, I see.” Alastor says mockingly, but his voice is weak. Very, very weak. “You must be in fine condition.”

“I - I’m sorry.” Sera stammers. Lucifer lifts his head up, and as she tries to approach them, he protectively brings Alastor closer to his chest.

“Stay back!” Lucifer growls, and he can feel his demon horns extend outwards. “Stay. Back.”

Sera stops in her tracks, regret written all over her face. The situation is tense. So quiet, someone could hear a pin drop.

Because what is he supposed to do?

It's just an accident, Lucifer thinks, reciting it like a mantra, *an accident an accident an accident an accident an accident an accident…*

But it hurts to see it - hurts to be there - he can feel Alastor's laboured breathing, the way his entire body shakes, and Lucifer wants to kiss him and take him away and keep him safe forever and ever and ever, *please, god, why did this happen?*

"Let me heal you." Lucifer mumbles. "I can fix-"

-but Alastor places a finger on his lips, shutting him up. The simple action catches him off-guard, and Lucifer's demon horns recede, his eye colour returning back to its usual gold.

"Shh." Alastor murmurs. They stare at each other, and his gaze seems to say,

Trust me.

"I'm sorry. Please." Sera's completely transformed out of her angelic state, and she only has open concern on her face. "That was unintentional. I'll heal you - I couldn't - will you forgive me, Alastor?"

Alastor turns to look at her, still clutching his torso.

"I could forgive you." He says delicately. "If we make a deal."

"A… deal?" Sera furrows her brows. Charlie quickly steps in, a little concerned.

"Alastor, you shouldn't take Sera's soul." She says tentatively. "I mean, is that even possible?"

"Not for her soul." Alastor's voice still lacks his usual radio filter, and it's strange to hear him speak this way for an extended period. "I shall forgive you, if you explain what is the matter. You are causing quite the heartache for Lucifer here."

All of them - Lucifer, Sera, and Charlie - look absolutely shocked by this.

"I believe those terms are more than fair." Alastor continues. "I could have simply demanded that you support the hotel, but…"

He glances over at Charlie. "You probably wouldn't want that, my dear."

"No. No forcing." She says immediately. Alastor shrugs, before nestling deeper into Lucifer's embrace.

"Spoilsport."

Sera - for the first time today - lets out a small laugh. “You would go through all this trouble on Lucifer’s behalf? Just to hear my thoughts?”

“Well!” Alastor rolls his eyes. "You are being quite irksome. Unfortunately, I had no other alternative.”

Sera’s eyes dart amongst the three of them, Lucifer-Alastor-Charlie-Lucifer-Alastor-Charlie, and she’s clearly fighting an internal battle. Alastor impatiently waves his hand at her, detracting her from her musings.

“So, what do you say? Shall we make a deal?”

“That is unnecessary.” Sera looks at his hand pensively, before locking eyes with Lucifer.

And there’s something about her expression - Alastor’s offer must have shifted her opinion, because she no longer seems terrified, or angered; instead, what Lucifer can recognize is…

Penitence… regret... and…

Gratitude?

“It is entirely my fault that the situation has unfolded like this.” Sera gestures at Alastor, who is still clutching his wound. “And I do understand why you’d like an explanation."

She kneels down in front of him and Alastor, her hands neatly folded in her lap. She looks over at Charlie, and gestures with her head. “Come, sit with us, princess.”

“O-okay!”

She hastily settles down beside Sera, sitting with her legs to the side, and - for once - they’re all at the same eye-level. They gaze at each other; Sera runs a hand through her hair restlessly, as though she were struggling on how to phrase it.

"Allow me to elucidate." Sera begins. Her tremulous voice echoes within the colosseum, betraying her anxiety. “Your hotel project has been quite eye-opening, princess. I am impressed by how much effort and progress you’ve made. It is only…”

She dithers for a second, before continuing. “It is very alarming.”

“Why?” Charlie asks. Sera lets out a deep sigh, her face troubled.

“You have shown me that people are capable of change. That with time and practice, they can become better versions of themselves.”

Her silver eyes stare off into the distance, a little forlorn. “People who have made it to Heaven are supposed to be the best of the best. But your hotel indicates that humans can grow, and improve. Do you know what that means?”

“That sinners can be redeemed?” Charlie says hopefully.

“Yes.” Sera concedes. “Which means that I was wrong. All the choices I’ve made to protect my people are completely erroneous. And as head seraphim, I am supposed to know better. I have to be *good.* I have to always *be right.”*

Sera buries her face into her hands. “And this is why I couldn’t talk about it with you, Lucifer. To confess how much I have failed… all that needless conflict…”

She takes in a deep breath, her voice slightly muffled from underneath her palms.

“Well. Now that I’ve admitted the truth - my mistakes - my doubt with Heaven’s system… I’m afraid of what will come next.”

They sit there in silence, the weight of Sera’s words pressing down on them. Lucifer clings onto Alastor a little tighter, before glancing over at Charlie.

How is she handling this? Lucifer thinks. *Is she sad, or scared, or…*

The answer is neither of those, apparently, because Charlie’s eyes shine with newfound determination. “Then make up for your mistakes, Sera!”

Sera lifts her head up, looking utterly confused. “Pardon?”

“You fucked up, sure.” Charlie says. “But life always has its challenges. So there’s an issue with how you’ve been running things. Are you going to feign ignorance, and prevent sinners from becoming better? Or will you be part of the solution, and help them?”

Her emphatic proclamation makes Sera pause for a moment. She places a hand on her chin, and looks at Charlie thoughtfully.

“You make it sound so easy.”

“Because it *is* easy!”

“I suppose… it could be.” Sera says, rather wistfully. “Wouldn’t that be nice?”

Sera remains quiet as she treads up and down the colosseum arena. She’s thinking hard, and Lucifer knows better than to speak with her when she’s contemplating.

Instead, he looks down at Alastor, who is still snugly cradled within his embrace. He looks perfectly at home there, his head resting on Lucifer's chest.

"Can I heal you now?" He asks.

At this, Alastor starts to shake. Lucifer gazes at him worriedly, afraid that he's trembling from the pain, but then-

Alastor bursts into an all-out cackle, his laughter so piercing that Lucifer has to lean away from him.

"Ha-ha-HA! You are all so very gullible."

Charlie swivels her head over. "Uh, Alastor? What do you mean?"

"Oh, just this."

Alastor unwraps his arms from his torso, and-

He's.

Not.

Wounded.

Not at all. What he was *actually* doing was protecting his radio staff from prying eyes; it's currently snapped in half, just like after he fought Adam. Sera glances over when she hears this, and he waves a severed piece in her direction.

"You've merely broken my staff, seraphim. But I did think you would act a little more sympathetic if you thought you had injured me."

Lucifer gawks at him, feeling equal parts relieved and outraged. "You were just pretending to be hurt? But you- you were shaking!"

"Oh, I was only suppressing my laughter." Alastor, that absolute fucker, cackles even harder. "This is still quite inconvenient for me. I can't mask my voice with my cane like this."

"You fucking asshole! I was worried about you!"

"Are you angry, *darling?"* Alastor says innocently, and for one second, Lucifer forgets why he was so mad in the first place. "I thought you'd be pleased!"

"Don't- you-" Lucifer sputters, and with all his strength, he shoves Alastor off from his lap. He lands on the ground with a painful

thwack!

and he glares at Lucifer.

"Well. Now I really *am* hurt."

“Oh, fuck off.”

Truthfully, seeing Alastor being his usual asshole self does make Lucifer feel at ease. Even though he had only been faking it, Alastor’s pained state reminded him of his first injury - when Lucifer had to heal him in his radio tower.

Sera crouches down, and touches his staff. In an instant, she restores it back to normal, and offers it back to Alastor.

“I believe this is yours.”

Alastor accepts it gingerly, and twirls it around in his hand a few times. When he speaks, the fuzzy radio filter is back, concealing his voice. “Ah. Perfection!”

“Apologies again, Alastor.” Sera says. “I did not mean to hurt you.”

And then she looks over at Lucifer, her eyes sorrowful. “Or you.”

He stiffens up at this, before looking away. The history between them is incredibly complicated, resembling a tangled web. Yet at the core of it all, he can’t stop himself from caring about her.

“I know.” Lucifer says eventually. “But the pain is still there.”

She nods, and doesn’t push for his forgiveness. All she does is extend a hand out to him, offering to help him up from the ground - a gesture of goodwill.

He can accept that, at least, and so he claps his palm onto hers. Once she pulls him up to his feet, she lowers her voice, so quiet he has to strain to hear her:

“I’ve ruined our progress, haven’t I.”

Lucifer opens his mouth.

Closes it.

And then shakes his head.

“It’s not… I think we’ve both done things to hurt each other.” He lands on saying. “Classic us, am I right?”

He laughs, the sound a bit hollow, and Sera doesn’t join in. At her solemn expression, he stops chuckling, deciding to speak seriously for a change.

“I know I’ve been kind of… confusing.” He says gingerly. “And I definitely pushed your limits today. You wanted space, and I ignored that.”

“You are far too generous, Lucifer.” Sera’s eyes soften. “I am the one at fault. And perhaps I did desire solitude, but truthfully… I am glad you followed me, now.”

Sera shoots him a smile, large and genuine, before turning to address them all.

“I have made my decision.”

Charlie perks up at this, and they all wait for her decree.

“Heaven requires order. And I am supposed to preserve it. Long term, it would be far easier to sweep this under the rug.”

Sera wrings her hands together, a little unsure. “However, regarding those souls down in Hell… if those sinners can atone and learn how to be better people, then they *do* belong up in Heaven, don’t they?”

Charlie’s eyes widen at this. “So - so then- what are you trying to say?”

“I am saying that it would be my duty to take care of them.” Sera smiles at her sincerely. “Besides. It is clear that people have both good and bad traits, and that there is not a rigid dichotomy between those two. You have a prime example here, don’t you? A demon…”

Sera sweeps one hand over to Alastor,

“and an angel,”

her other hand gestures to Lucifer,

“being together. An unlikely duo, yet you two are perfect for one another, aren’t you?”

“Leave us out of this.” Alastor says stiffly. Lucifer feels his face heat up, and when he peeks over, he can see that Alastor has a hand covering his face, his deer ears flat on his head.

So he’s just embarrassed, he thinks.

“We will work together, princess.” Sera continues. “Let’s share this news with the rest of your hotel. We should return to court. I know that Lute had something to tell me, as well.”

Charlie looks like she’s bursting at the seams with glee. “Yes, of course, let’s do that let’s go right now, hurry, amazing, YAY, thank you so much Sera-”

As Charlie is blabbering on and on, distracting Sera, Lucifer turns to Alastor. He’s adjusting the crown on his head, but stops when he feels Lucifer’s stare.

“What is it?”

He gestures for Alastor to bend down, and he lowers himself so that Lucifer can speak into his ear. He’s got something to ask - something that’s been stuck on his mind for a while.

“Why’d you take the hit for me?” Lucifer whispers. “You know I can just heal.”

“Oh?” Alastor responds, tone purposefully even. “Were my actions an inconvenience?”

“It’s not an *inconvenience,* more like… why?”

Alastor gazes at him, before turning away.

Places his hand on his deer ears, and pulls it back.

Then drags his palm down the length of his neck uncomfortably. All-in-all, it's been a while since Lucifer's seen him act this uncertain, this hesitant.

"If it's that hard for you-"

"It is only-"

They speak at the same time, and stop.

"You go ahead." Lucifer says hurriedly.

"How magnanimous of you." There's no venom in Alastor's voice, and he finally looks back at Lucifer, his red eyes startlingly clear. "The reason is quite simple, really."

And…

Alastor places his hand on Lucifer's face, cupping his cheek gently. He can feel Alastor's thumb idly stroking his cheekbone, the way his large hand tenderly holds him, like he's something precious to handle.

"I wasn't able to help you last time." Alastor says softly, his voice hushed. "And so this time around, I knew I had to do everything in my power to reach you."

Oh.

His words make Lucifer's heart squeeze, so he places his small hand over his much larger one. Alastor's face flushes a bit at the action, looking uncharacteristically shy, but he resumes speaking.

"Perhaps you don't require any protection. But I don't like seeing you get hurt, Lucifer, and…"

His hand shakes a little against Lucifer's cheek, and he sighs out,

"If I can lessen the burden on you, then I will."

It's just a few words, strung together in a sentence, yet the earnestness behind it makes Lucifer's heart stutter-

skip a beat-

butterflies in the stomach-

all the clichés about romance hit him all at once, *all at the same time* because he comes to a realization.

(one that's so obvious it's almost comical, isn't it?)

I'm hopelessly in love with Alastor.

Chapter End Notes

Fun Facts:
- I was thinking that the show prioritizes learning from past wrongs, and trying to right them. So it's okay to make mistakes, and of course "it starts with sorry," you know?
- I decided to go more with virtue ethics and a little bit of moral particularism, but being right/wrong/good/evil is (as mentioned in the story) not so easy to define.
- I don't think of Sera as a purposefully malicious person. So when faced with overwhelming evidence, I believe she'd change her mind.
- Dance lesson/workshops is from (ch. 29)
- Exploring the city is from (ch. 30)
- Heaven suppresses their powers from (ch. 18)
- Lute injures Lucifer in (ch. 20), which kicks up Alastor's protective mode! Alastor could only wrap up his wound for him at the time, so he's felt bad about not being there for him. I had them parallel it this time: Alastor gets 'injured,' and so we have protective Lucifer!
- Alastor's staff breaking is from the show - and Lucifer healed his wound in (ch. 5)
- Lucifer tried to reach out to Sera earlier, and she kept avoiding it - so this time I had Sera extend a hand to him instead! Reconciliation!
- Lucifer and Sera are both worried about ruining their relationship with one another (ch. 42)
- Also Alastor said he'll make Sera listen to Lucifer (ch. 42), which he does this chapter
- Lute and Sera mirror each other with their concerns about making errors

We're officially done Act 8, and we are now in the FINAL ACT! I also have good news
- I will release my 18+ spin-off on Jan. 31. Hope you'll read it! Just FYI it'll be multi-chaptered.

They have yet to say 'I love you' to each other, so my QUESTION for you this time is: who will say 'I love you' first, Lucifer or Alastor? Next update on Jan. 24, see you then <3

The Way I Love You

Chapter Summary

Previously on OSAS:
- Charlie presents the Hazbin Hotel to Sera
- Sera runs away with fear
- Alastor ‘sacrifices’ himself to protect Lucifer
- Sera agrees to work with the Hazbin Hotel
- Lucifer realizes he’s in love with Alastor

Chapter Notes

CH. 44 FANART:
- comic by: @dirtgrubber
- drawn by @xxartbunnyxx: 1 + 2
- drawn by: @0-cloud-puff-0
- drawn by: @estigiak.bsky.social
- comic by: @seaweedmakesart

THANK YOU ALWAYS!! You fill my heart with so much love! Find me on Tumblr, Twitter, and Bluesky

See the end of the chapter for more notes

LOCATION: The Courtroom.

TOPIC: The Moment of Truth.

FEATURING: Charlie, who is about to vibrate out of her skin from excitement.

They’re all seated, once again. Sera has reclaimed her spot back at the front of the room, and she looks at them apologetically.

“Forgive me for leaving so abruptly. I had some personal issues to work through.”

“That’s okay!” Emily grabs onto Sera’s hand. “I’m just glad you’re back.”

“I appreciate it.” She smiles at Emily, before gazing at the rest of them. “At the very least, I was able to come to a decision. As the Princess has brought proof that being ‘good’ or ‘bad’ is not fixed in stone, I’ve decided that we should support her rehabilitation centre - otherwise known as the Hazbin Hotel.”

Charlie still has a hard time believing that it's finally worked out for her.

Is this reality? Or just a dream? She thinks, a little dazed. She pinches herself, and sighs dreamily at the stinging ache. *Yep. It's real.*

As Sera continues to speak, Charlie forces herself to pay attention. "For those who have demonstrated improvement… what would you like to do for them, Princess?"

"Right!" Charlie quickly stands up in her seat. "The thing is, not everyone *wants* to come up to Heaven. I mean, Hell can be fun too, you know? It's just, there are some parts that suck down there - like the torturing, and the pain-"

"Speak for yourself." Niffty chimes in. "I like pain!"

"-okay, so maaaaaaaybe not pain." Charlie amends hastily. "I was thinking that your realm has access to things that we don't have. As an example, what if a sinner becomes better, and they have a fun time in Hell, but they really miss their pet dog?"

"Their… dog?" Sera echoes, confused.

"Yeah! That's where you come in." She motions towards the seraphims. "You two can provide them with one to ease their pain. For people who do want to come up, we can think about ways to bring them here."

"In other words, we will have separate realms, and help each other out." Sera summarizes. "At the same time, we can provide sinners with an opportunity to ascend to Heaven, if they so wish."

"Yes, that's exactly it!"

Emily excitedly claps her hands together. "What a great idea! And Charlie, now we have a reason to hang out more!"

"Oh, Emily. Of course!" She beams. "You're always welcome at my hotel."

"Only if I'm there too." Vaggie mutters under her breath. Charlie stifles a giggle at her jealousy; honestly, it's so silly for Vaggie to feel any sort of pressure, but she loves that aspect about her.

"All of that sounds manageable to me." Sera nods in agreement. "Princess, I look forward to working with you long-term."

"Me too!"

Sera then motions towards Lute, who is sitting far away from everyone else. Strangely enough, Niffty had chosen to sit beside her.

Even stranger, Lute *allowed* her to stay there, although she's resolutely ignoring all of Niffty's antics.

“Before we conclude this court, I would like to give the floor to Lute.” Sera says. “I know you had something to discuss.”

Lute nods, but she clasps her hands together so tightly, her knuckles begin to turn white. As she doesn’t respond straight away, Niffty pats her shoulder.

“Nothing to be scared about!” She says brightly. “Spit it out so we can leave, hehe.”

“Don’t rush me, swine.” Lute scowls, her eyebrows furrowed. Although, she does look marginally better after Niffty’s encouragement (?).

“Alright.” Lute begins. “This is the whole story, your highness.”

Lute recounts everything, from start to finish. Occasionally, Lucifer interjects to play his part as a witness, like he promised. After he does this a few times, the rest of the hotel join in to speak on Lute’s behalf.

(Except for Alastor, but that was to be expected.)

Once Lute finishes her tale, Sera stares at her silently, her expression equal parts troubled and confused.

“Lute, your candour is much appreciated, but…” She lets out an exasperated sigh. “I am confused as to why it took you *this* long to tell me.”

Lute wavers for a second, looking deeply troubled, and she takes a while to come up with a sentence.

“Angels are not cowards. We can’t be. Yet I was- afraid.” She lets out a sigh, like it pains her to admit it. “I was fearful about the consequences of my actions. I had thought the guilt would ease with time, but evidently, it did not. So I decided to take responsibility, like the king suggested.”

Lute gestures towards Lucifer. He hadn’t anticipated for her to namedrop him, but it’s a nice surprise, all things considered.

Charlie turns to look at him, eyes shiny with unshed tears. “Aw, dad! You helped her?”

“I just said a few things.” Lucifer whispers. “I really don’t think I did all that much.”

Sera places her chin in her hand, mulling over Lute’s declaration. At the very least, she doesn’t look upset by the news.

“I do empathize, Lute, and I admire your bravery for coming forward.” Sera settles on saying. “Although, you realize that you must be penalized in some form.”

“Sera, really?” Emily gazes at her pleadingly. “Can’t we just let it slide?”

“Actions have repercussions, Emily.” Her demeanour is stern. Forceful. Assertive.

Until she makes eye contact with Lucifer, and her face breaks into a smile. “However, a lot has occurred today, hasn’t it? So in light of these circumstances, I am unfit to bestow punishment on you. Therefore, I will leave the decision to…”

Sera points and moves her finger dramatically at their direction, before stopping at:

“Niffty.”

Everyone starts speaking at the same time:

“Wait-”

“Er-”

“Seriously-”

“WHAT?!” Lute’s voice pierces through the hubbub. “Are you really leaving my fate in her hands, your highness?!”

“She *is* the one who was kidnapped, Lute. It is more than fair to have her decide what happens.” Sera says solemnly, but she has her hand covering her mouth, like she’s trying to muffle her laugh.

In the meantime, Niffty looks absolutely delighted. She grabs onto Lute’s hair and pulls her close, forcing her to look into her single eye.

“YAY! Punishment! And I already know what I want you to do.”

Lute -*tsks* at her, her displeasure apparent on her face. “What the hell are you planning?”

“Just cleaning!” Niffty says enthusiastically. “Every weekend, for the next ten years.”

“Oh.” Lute blinks at this. “That’s actually not too bad-”

“At the Hazbin Hotel!”

Lute physically recoils at the suggestion, her eyes wide with panic. “NO! Over my dead fucking body, bitch!”

“What the fuck, Niffty?! I object. OBJECTION!” Vaggie yells. “Charlie, you can’t have this fucking asshole in our home! She literally tried to kill us!”

Charlie anxiously looks between Lute, Niffty and Vaggie, gaze darting amongst them at lightning speed. “I get your concern, Vaggie, but… maybe we’ll just have Niffty watch over her. As, um, her jail warden?”

“Yay! I’ll keep my eye on her!” Niffty points toward her single eye as emphasis, and Lute groans, covering her face with her hand.

“Why don’t you just kill me now? It would be much more humane.”

Sera actually laughs out loud at this, and it echoes warmly in the courtroom. “It’s called a punishment for a reason, Lute. I do hope you’ll learn from this experience.”

Lute still has her hand over her face, so the rest of what she says is a bunch of muffled gibberish. Probably just further complaints. Sera pays her no heed, and strikes her gavel on the table.

“In any case, this court is officially adjourned. You are free to do as you wish.”

“I’ll make a portal for you in the evening!” Emily pipes in. “Let’s meet at the promenade later.”

As everyone prepares to leave, Lucifer elbows Alastor’s side to get his attention. “Where to?”

At the question, Alastor’s eyes crinkle into a smile.

“Oh, you know where.”

And where else would they go, besides the ice cream parlour?

Lucifer stares down at the melting ice cream cone in his hands, too lost in thought to eat. Now that they’re finally done with the Hazbin Hotel Happening™, he can focus on something a little more urgent.

Okay. So I'm in love with Alastor. Lucifer thinks. *That's a good thing, right? People like to hear that sort of stuff?*

He sneaks a glance over at Alastor, who practically unhinges his jaw to eat his ice cream. He devours it in one go, and delicately wipes his mouth with his handkerchief afterwards.

"Ah. As good as I remembered." He says, sounding pleased. Lucifer doesn't respond, still ruminating over what to do.

Back when he realized he liked Alastor (non-platonically), he had tried to confess to him. Lucifer had painstakingly made preparations for the whole shebang - composing a song, creating the jazz club…

But Alastor, annoyingly enough, had confessed to him first.

Jerk.

Lucifer scowls at him, and Alastor arches an eyebrow. "What is it?"

"Just thinking about how irritating you are."

Alastor scoffs. "I could say the same about you."

"Nah." Lucifer sticks his tongue out to blow a raspberry, *tbbbht*. "You really take the cake."

Alastor seizes Lucifer's jacket lapels-

"Ha-ha-HA! Why don't you ask around? I'm sure they'll consider *you* as the top contender."

Lucifer yanks Alastor by his overcoat-

"Ha-ha-HA! I don't need to! Everyone knows that *you're* the worst!"

They both glare at each other, before turning away in a huff. Alastor can really be so infuriating, in a way that makes his blood boil, his heart race, his palms sweat…

Lucifer takes a bite out of his ice cream, trying to cool himself off. It's appalling how much he likes it when Alastor acts like a jerk.

Scratch that, how much he *loves* it.

All of this leads back to the dilemma of how he should tell Alastor, 'I love you,' because there's one, small, little, itty-bitty, minor detail.

Would Alastor…

say it back?

Because.

Listen.

They've been dating for a while.

And undoubtedly, Alastor cares deeply about Lucifer's wellbeing.

But would he really want to lay himself bare like this? To admit that you love someone becomes a bit of a weakness, does it not? He can practically hear how Alastor would respond to his confession:

Oh, you. Alastor-in-his-head says. *Love is far too much of a burden for me. So I will have to decline.*

Lucifer winces at the rejection. Fucking hell, how is his own imagination hurting him?

While he's still suffering internally, Alastor leans down to chomp on Lucifer's ice cream scoop. He takes such a big bite that there's only a bit of the waffle cone left, and Lucifer gapes down at the leftovers.

"Why'd you take mine?!"

"You snooze, you lose, sir."

"Uh, the shop is literally right there." Lucifer gestures towards the parlour, and Alastor lifts an eyebrow.

"Are you that unwilling to share? How selfish of you."

And now Lucifer has no idea how he could be in love with such a scumbag. He tosses the rest of the cone into his mouth, angrily chewing as Alastor watches over him.

"Lucifer."

"What."

"You are in deep thought."

He doesn't elaborate any further, but Lucifer freezes at the statement. The thing is, Alastor's always seen right through him; although he doesn't want him to worry, he *also* doesn't want to declare his love right here, right now.

"Uh…" Lucifer racks his brain for a plausible excuse, and brightens when he conceives of one. "We made a bet! Remember? When we were secretly dating."

Alastor blinks at this, before slowly nodding. "Ah, yes. It was when we kept on getting discovered by others."

"You know that most people found out about us 'cause of *you,* right? So I'm pretty sure you lost that one."

Lucifer can't help but grin at the memory. Alastor had been unusually reckless, leaving clues of their relationship behind like crumbs on a trail. Alastor must have felt completely out of

his element, being in a partnership with… anyone, really.

Alastor glares at him from the corner of his eye, but he does yield. “Very well. What request did you have in mind?”

“I promised to take you to Lu Lu World, right?” Lucifer says. “Meet me in a few days at the entrance. After sunset. It’s a date, so you can’t say no.”

Alastor’s deer ears perk up at this, seeming rather surprised. “This is the first time you’ve properly asked me out.”

Lucifer’s initial thought is just,

????

before he flips through all the stuff that they’ve done together, every little moment that they’ve experienced with one another in the past few months. Oddly enough, this *would* be the first time he’s asked Alastor on an Official Date©.

“Oh, shit.” Lucifer feels rather sheepish. “My bad. Let me make it up to you? I’ll invite you out to the next hundred dates.”

“One *hundred?”* Alastor says incredulously. Despite his tone, his eyes gleam with amusement. “You really are so ridiculous.”

“Dad! Alastor!” Charlie waves at them from afar, distracting them from their conversation. “We’re heading back now! You coming?”

“Yep, one sec!” Lucifer replies. He takes one last glance around Heaven - the fluffy clouds, the blue skies, the endless sunny days - and he’s hit with a wave of ennui. It’s always nostalgic, being up here, and he slows his walking speed to soak it in properly.

Which Alastor picks up on. “Are you concerned about leaving?”

“I…” Lucifer looks away. “Maybe a little.”

There’s a moment of quietude between them, before Alastor speaks.

“Knowing you, you’ll return before you know it. So there’s no need to feel sorrow.”

Alastor offers his hand out to him, and Lucifer feels rather touched by everything: Alastor’s words, his actions, his unexpected kindness.

And so Lucifer grabs on, interlacing their fingers together perfectly.

“Yeah, you’re right. Let’s get outta here.”

The passage of time is really unfortunate.

(For Lute, that is.)

Because a few days later, she's down in Hell for her first day of forced community service. She's carrying a bucket in one hand, a trash-picking stick in the other, and Niffty is trailing hot on her heels.

"You missed a spot!" Niffty says cheerily.

"Whatever." Lute huffs. She stabs her stick into a piece of litter, and tosses it forcefully into the bucket. "It's absolutely filthy here."

"I know. But with you here, we'll get it done twice as fast!"

"I can't believe this is what my weekends will look like for the next ten years." Lute says mournfully. "If I had known, I wouldn't have bothered kidnapping you in the first place."

"But you did. And now you're here. YAY!"

Lute grumbles, and as she continues tidying up the hotel grounds, she slows down her steps when she sees a familiar location.

The spot where Adam had passed away.

She crouches down, and touches the soil delicately. There's nothing there, of course - he's long-gone. That stupid little brat had made sure of that.

Lute glances over at her, watching as Niffty continues chucking garbage into the bucket. As she had suspected, Niffty's mind doesn't really seem to be all *there*. She probably lived a horrible life, back when she had been human.

As though she can feel her stare, Niffty looks up at her. "What are you doing?"

Lute tightens her grip on the dirt, before finally letting go. "Cleaning. What does it look like, idiot?"

"Like you're in pain." Niffty says. "And not in a good way."

Lute narrows her eyes at her. Niffty's being strangely astute, and it's making her uncomfortable.

“I’ll be fine.” Lute says, voice clipped. “So leave it alone.”

Niffty looks like she’s about to argue, but blessedly, something else catches her attention. Lute follows her gaze, and spies Lucifer exiting the doorway, whistling without a care in the world.

“The royal bad boy!” Niffty calls out. Lucifer looks up, a little startled at being addressed. “Off on a date, sir?”

“I-” Lucifer yanks at his bow-tie, looking caught. “Well, yeah. Don’t wait up!”

He hurriedly spreads out his wings and flies into the distance, like he can’t escape fast enough. Lute sighs at this, wishing wistfully that she could just fly back to Heaven.

“Gross.” She scoffs, digging at the trash a little more aggressively now. “I don’t understand this hotel. How is everyone here in a relationship? And when do you actually get *work* done?”

“I’m single!” Niffty says brightly.

“What a surprise.”

“I know, right!”

“I was being sarcastic.”

Lucifer claps his hands together once he’s finished his preparations. He had arrived early to arrange the park for Alastor’s arrival, and if he’s being honest, he did a pretty bang-up job.

He paces around the gates, tugging at the padlock to make sure it’s firmly bolted. Hopefully, no one can trespass into the park; he had closed it for the night, making sure that it’s reserved for only the two of them.

Today is THE DAY! Lucifer thinks determinedly. *I’ll definitely be the first to say ‘I love you.’ Now all that’s left is to wait for Alastor-*

“He-llo!”

“ACK!”

Lucifer spins around at the voice, and he’s met with Alastor’s gleeful expression. “You are still so easily startled. How embarrassing, your majesty.”

The retaliation Lucifer had prepared dries up in his throat, because Alastor, he’s got- his-

His overcoat is off, dressed in his shirt and suspenders, with his hair up in a ponytail.

(The way that Lucifer likes it.)

“You…” He swallows, and broadly motions at Alastor. “Your hair- clothes- you-”

“And what about me?” Alastor says, feigning ignorance. His smug countenance gives him away, however, indicating that he knows exactly what he’s doing.

Fine. Two can play at that game, because he also knows what Alastor is into.

Lucifer clears his throat, and regains his composure. With a wave of his hand, he conjures up the deer ears headband, which he had kept from the first time they visited Lu Lu World. “Since we’re going into an amusement park, I should look the part.”

As he places it on his head, he can see Alastor’s eyes grow wider at the sight, his stare practically burning holes through him. It blends in seamlessly with his blonde hair, and Alastor’s pupils dilate a little.

“Lu…ci…fer…” He says, a bit strained.

“What?” Lucifer replies innocently. Alastor’s gaze flits between his headband and his golden eyes, like he’s unsure where to focus his attention. “Should I take it off?”

Lucifer lifts up his hand to remove it-

-and Alastor grabs onto his wrist, his large hand encircling his wrist entirely.

“No.”

Alastor’s voice is lowered.

Rough.

There’s a tension that stretches between them, discernible in the air, and it makes Lucifer want to run his fingers through Alastor’s hair - tug at his suspenders to bring him close - slide his leg up against his…

Alastor seems to sense it too, although with the two choices of

OPTION A: Tackle the tension
OPTION B: Avoid the tension

he appears to opt for OPTION B. He hurriedly lets go of Lucifer, and pulls something out of his pocket.

A single apple.

“For you.” Alastor says, voice taut. Lucifer accepts it, albeit with some perplexity.

“Why’d you bring me this?”

“You provided me some flowers on our first date, did you not?” Alastor pointedly looks away from him. “I ought to return the favour. It’s what social decorum dictates, after all.”

Lucifer brings it closer, and examines the ruby red surface. It’s so shiny, it almost looks plastic. With Alastor offering the fruit to him, it all feels strangely symbolic, its connotations racing by in his head.

The story of the garden. Adam and Eve.

Knowledge.

Immortality.

Temptation.

Sin.

He slowly looks up at Alastor, wondering if it has some sort of double meaning. “Are you trying to say something? Accepting the apple means accepting my fate to stay in Hell, or something?”

Alastor lets out an exasperated snort, and all his suspicions are dashed. “You are overthinking this. You have an apple cane. Your overcoat resembles an apple’s core. You have an apple on your top hat. So I assume you enjoy apples. Need I list more?”

“Oh, fuck off.” Lucifer huffs. “Clearly I overestimated you.”

Nevertheless, he takes a bite. It’s incredibly sweet, and the crunch of the apple sounds particularly crisp.

“Huh.” Lucifer takes another bite. “I figured you’d give me a sour one.”

“I certainly will next time.”

“Hey.”

If someone told Alastor to go look for Lu Lu World, he would be hopelessly lost. Lucifer had transformed it entirely compared to their first visit, and- to put it kindly- it's in utter shambles.

The rides are all half-broken, with electric sparks zapping away in the air. Some of the attractions are even on fire, and it's a far cry from its usual pristine condition. Only the ferris wheel remains intact, still spinning away merrily.

"TA-DA!" Lucifer motions at the park with his apple staff. "The rides were too boring for you last time, right? So I removed all the safety precautions! Now you have no idea when or where the ride will break down. Feast your eyes on the element of SURPRISE!"

Out of nowhere, Lucifer tosses a handful of confetti in the air, and a few of them land in Alastor's hair. He certainly is a showman, through and through, and Alastor can feel laughter building up at the back of his throat.

"What an improvement!" Alastor says, genuinely delighted. "This is the perfect location to play a game."

Lucifer tilts his head. "What game?"

"Oh, something simple. Seeing that it is already in a wrecked state, why don't we thoroughly destroy it?" Alastor suggests. "Let's count how many rides we each tear down. And the one with the highest number wins."

"The prize?"

"A request. As per usual."

"You're on!"

Alastor presents his hand to him, and Lucifer shakes it with gusto. Without even planning on it,

Alastor dashes to the left,

Lucifer flies to the right,

and the game is afoot.

The whole world is bright red.

Or at least, the amusement park is. All the rides are on the brink of explosion, with flames bursting out at random intervals. It's incredibly dangerous, and Alastor almost gets burnt to a crisp as he dodges the electric sparks in the air.

Astounding! Alastor thinks. It's almost as though he were made of electricity himself, his heart charged and pulsating. Overflowing with so much joy, he'll practically rupture from the elation inside him.

This is what he's after - the feeling of being alive, even when he isn't.

Alastor lands on a rollercoaster track, and it crumples underneath his weight, as though it were made of paper. In the corner of his eye, he can see Lucifer jumping onto the cart behind him, balancing precariously on the bench.

Alastor turns to look at him. "This marks my tenth one. And you?"

"HAH! It's my eleventh!"

Alastor growls at this, but truthfully, he's not that upset; he rather savours how their competitive sides are omnipresent, a combative undercurrent that exists in their relationship.

I have always been searching for this, Alastor suddenly realizes. *Someone who I can truly call my equal, on every level.*

And it's true, because Lucifer is the only one who has ever kept up with him, be it in life or death. No one else seems to match his capacity for destruction; for creation; for anything, and everything.

Alastor is still standing on the tracks, contemplating about this fact, when Lucifer smacks him on the head,

slap!

Alastor hisses at the contact, and when he turns around to retaliate, Lucifer's already flying into the distance.

"You better hurry up, loser!" Lucifer calls out.

"Enjoy your head-start while it lasts, ingrate." Alastor responds snidely.

Well. Lucifer may be his counterpart, but he refuses to cede the victory to him. Alastor refocuses his energy on destroying the rides, and they spend the rest of the twilight hour separately.

It starts to rain.

Lucifer looks up at the sky, watching as the gentle drizzle douses out the fire. The park is still illuminated by the ferris wheel - the only ride that they both left untouched.

(He intentionally kept it in one piece, because he has fond memories of riding it with Alastor, okay? Sue him for being sentimental.)

Still, Lu Lu World could use some extra lights. He snaps his fingers, and every single lamppost lights up. The soft rain makes everything look extra fuzzy and aglow, like the very atmosphere is made of magic.

He looks around, trying to find Alastor. He's nowhere near him, but that's alright - he can just summon him.

"Alastor." Lucifer says, to no one.

And in an instant, he emerges from his shadow, leaning against his radio cane with practiced nonchalance. "You called?"

"Yeah. It's raining. Let's hide until it clears up."

Alastor shrugs, noncommittal, which Lucifer takes as a 'yes'. The two of them take shelter at a storefront awning, and they shake themselves in an attempt to dry off.

For the next couple of minutes, they watch the rain in silence, listening to its soothing pitter-patter. The drizzle is quite beautiful to look at, soft and hazy from the rainbow glow of the ferris wheel. It's hard to believe that this was a location in Hell, its splendour rivalling those up in Heaven - with some violent tweaks, of course.

Eventually, Alastor speaks.

"How many rides have you torn down?"

Lucifer turns to face him. Even when soaked by the rain, Alastor looks put-together, his ponytail still affixed in place. “21. You?”

“23.”

Alastor’s grin widens, while Lucifer’s mouth twists into a frown. “Fuck. I guess you won this time.”

“Indeed!” He sings. “And so I would like to make my request.”

“Already?” Lucifer furrows his eyebrows. “That’s rare. What is it?”

Alastor extends a hand towards him, his red fingers outstretched invitingly. Lucifer looks at it for a second, before hesitantly placing his palm onto his. “Is this what you were looking for, or-”

He gets his answer when Alastor pulls him close, the two of them standing in a promenade position. Alastor’s large hands hold onto him firmly, so steadfast in its grip.

“Do you know how to dance the foxtrot?” Alastor asks. Lucifer stiffens up at the question - he does, but he feels a little embarrassed admitting as to *why* he knows.

“Yes.” He says slowly. “I actually… I’ve studied how to do it.”

“When?”

Great. He had hoped that Alastor wouldn’t ask that. “After we performed at Mimzy’s club.”

“Mimzy’s club?” Alastor says thoughtfully. “Why that time, exactly?”

Lucifer tightens his grasp on Alastor’s hand, his fingers digging in nervously. “I - what’s the big deal? Why’re you asking?”

“You are reacting so peculiarly, Lucifer.” Alastor leans in, and his eyes grow even larger, if that was possible. “Now I am even more curious!”

“Quit asking.”

“But I’d like to know.”

“Well, I’m not telling you!”

“You must. I insist!”

“I won’t.”

“You will.”

“Won’t.”

“Will.”

“Won’t.”

“Will-”

Lucifer lets out an exasperated groan, already knowing that it was a losing battle. “Fine. FINE! It’s because *you* liked those dances! So I studied the Charleston, the foxtrot, the - every dance style from the early 1900’s. I learned it all.”

Alastor blinks once,

twice,

thrice,

and then a huge grin splits his face.

“My, my. We were not even friends at the time, Lucifer. Have you been interested in me for *that* long?”

And this is why he didn’t want to admit anything, because Alastor would definitely lord this over him. God, he can feel his face heat up, and he wishes the ground would just swallow him up.

“Not - not in that way, you fucker!” Lucifer clings onto the last vestiges of his pride, to no avail. “Don’t act so smug.”

“How could I not be?” Alastor cackles. “I’ve had the King of Hell wrapped around my finger for *this* long, and I was not even aware.”

“Just shut up and dance, idiot.” Lucifer snaps. Alastor continues laughing, but without further preamble, they dance.

Step, by step.

The space under the awning is too small to properly dance, so Alastor tugs him out into the rain. The warm drizzle washes over them, but Lucifer finds the sensation rather pleasant, more of a gentle sprinkling in the evening air.

As they continue dancing, they effortlessly switch between who leads, and who follows. Over and over and over until…

he looks at Alastor’s smile, wide and genuine,

the kind of gentleness that is only reserved for Lucifer,

and it reminds him of when he saw Alastor without a smile. He wants to understand - wants to know why he didn’t have a smile, back when he was asleep in Heaven.

How do I even broach this organically?

“I can hear you thinking, sir.” Alastor says teasingly. “What is plaguing your mind?”

It’s both a blessing and a curse that Alastor can read him this well. Lucifer pauses dancing, and Alastor looks down, a bit puzzled. Their hands are still loosely gripped onto each other, and Lucifer purposefully avoids eye-contact with him.

Might as well ask, then.

“I was just thinking about how you slept without your smile.” He says carefully. “Was that… uh. That’s unusual for you, right?”

Alastor tilts his head at the question. Lucifer half-expects him to evade answering entirely, but miracle of all miracles, he gives a real response.

“Yes.” He concedes. He can feel Alastor’s long fingers trailing absentmindedly over Lucifer’s back, and the places where he’s touching feels enticing. Addicting.

“My smile has always been my best defensive and offensive tactic.” Alastor continues. “It riles up my enemies, making it far easier to outsmart them. And so I always have it on.”

The rain starts to ease up, although the ground is still covered in giant puddles. When Lucifer looks down, he can see their reflections, resembling portals into a parallel universe.

Alastor’s expression in the water looks kinder. Warmer.

As Lucifer looks up at him, he’s startled to realize that Alastor is looking at him like that - like he’s the only thing that matters.

(Like he’s worth something.)

“My biggest fear has always been losing control.” Alastor says quietly. “But once I met you… somehow, I’m not afraid anymore.”

Alastor slowly drops his smile.

His deer ears are pulled back, and his face is rather flushed, revealing how flustered he really feels. He’s always hidden his emotions with his smile; seeing him so uncharacteristically open and transparent fills Lucifer with a rush of affection.

“You’re so cute.” He can’t help but say.

“I am not.” Alastor mumbles half-heartedly. “I am the radio demon. I am supposed to strike your heart with terror.”

He sounds so petulant, it makes it all the more endearing. They stare at each other, and Lucifer needs to let him know, needs to say it, has to convey all these overwhelming, beautiful feelings he feels for him, even if Alastor won’t say it back, he needs to, yearns to, wants to, please-

“Alastor.”

Lucifer whispers, but against the silence, it's almost deafening.

"I love you."

In less than a millisecond, Alastor replies:

"I love you too."

He says it so quickly, Lucifer thinks he must have heard it wrong. "Can you repeat that?"

"I love you."

And it's the ease in which Alastor said it- like it's the simplest truth- that makes Lucifer's heart swell.

"Again?" He asks hopefully, heart hammering.

"I'll say it as many times as you want. For as long as you want." Alastor says seriously. "I really am in love with you, Lucifer."

Alastor picks him up like he's weightless, and closes the distance between them. He kisses Lucifer eagerly, tenderly; the mellow glow of the ferris wheel lights up Alastor's face, and he can't imagine a more wonderful moment in his life.

After a while, Lucifer breaks the kiss, and places his forehead against Alastor's. "Are you seriously kissing me in the rain? So cheesy."

"Don't complain." Alastor murmurs, red eyes gleaming in the darkness. "You made me this way."

"Not complaining. Nuh-uh."

Lucifer goes back in for another kiss.

And another.

And…

another.

Chapter End Notes

That concludes the Heaven/Lute/Sera arc! I will have a new villain for the final arc, so stay tuned!

Fun Facts:
- ice cream parlour from (ch. 18), changes flavours depending on a person's taste! Idk what flavour Alastor's would be - hopefully it's not meat lol
- Alastor confessed to Lucifer in (ch. 25) but Lucifer was making plans for it in (ch. 24)
- The bet is from (ch. 33): "For the next time, if you are the reason why someone finds out about us, you lose."
- Lucifer promised to bring Alastor back to Lu Lu World in (ch. 22 + ch. 40)
- For their first date, Alastor asked Lucifer out in (ch. 31)
- The first date (ch. 32) is when Lucifer gave Alastor some flowers, courtesy of Angel Dust
- Lute letting go of the soil where Adam passed away is both a literal and metaphorical 'letting go,' so that she can move on from her anger and grief
- I liked the idea of a demon offering an apple to the original temptation. Because Lucifer accepts it willingly while understanding all the ramifications that comes with it. It felt really poignant, so I decided to include it.
- He can summon Alastor just by saying his name from (ch. 25, ch. 33)
- Lucifer destroyed 21 rides, Alastor destroyed 23. 21 + 23 = 44, because this is chapter 44!
- Their outfits are the same as when they went to Lu Lu World the first time, (ch. 22 + ch. 23)
- They performed at Mimzy's club from (ch. 7/8)
- Also this is their fifth dance! And this time they don't bother fighting over who leads, they just take turns
- Alastor drops his smile for the first time in (ch. 42)

Next chapter will be a small time skip, and it will be about their 1st anniversary. SO, I want to post the 1st anniversary chapter on the 1st anniversary of OSAS! That will be Saturday, Feb. 15. Can you believe it's almost been a year since I started writing this fic?

In the meantime, I will post the 18+ spin-off series on Jan. 31. It will be set directly after THIS chapter. (I felt like Alastor wouldn't be comfortable doing anything unless they were in love.)

My QUESTION for you is: do you want me to end the series with a radioapple wedding? I'll put up some polls on my social media as well. See you in a few weeks!

The Anniversary

Chapter Summary

Previously on OSAS:
-Lute's punishment is to clean up at the Hotel
-Lucifer invites Alastor out to a date at Lu Lu World
-They destroy every single amusement park ride, dance in the rain, and confess their love to one another

Chapter Notes

CH. 45 FANART:
- comic by @dirtgrubber: 1 + 2 + 3
- drawn by @estigiak.bsky.social: 1 + 2
- drawn by: @mrnicklower008
- OSAS memes: 1 + 2 + 3
- OSAS playlists + songs: 1 + 2

I LOVE your art/memes/songs! YOU ARE ALL AMAAAAAAZING tag me if you have any please! All my social media links here

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Since their return from Heaven, everything at the Hazbin Hotel has gone smoothly (for a change)! The TV commercials are still on air, courtesy of Vox, and brand-new sinners drop in on the daily.

Even today, Charlie has to welcome in a whole new crop of demons. Not that she's complaining - in fact, she cheerily greets everyone that crosses her path.

"Hello!"

"Hi!"

"Good day!"

"You look gorgeous!"

And honestly? All Charlie feels is pride at what they've achieved together. Despite the conflict with both Heaven and the Vees, they've managed to smooth out most of their friction with one another.

For the first time in a long time, Charlie lets herself relax, and just enjoy the moment.

(But all good things come to an end, don't they?)

Katie Killjoy shoves a piece of paper in front of Tom. "Do you fucking see this, Tom?! Look at this shit!"

"What?" He goes cross-eyed trying to see the sheet, and he reads it aloud. "Recent 666 News Audience Statistics… uh oh."

"That's right. Viewership has dropped by 60%." She crumples the paper in her hands, and tosses it over her shoulder. "If we don't get our shit together, our bosses are gonna replace us."

"But there's nothing new to report." Tom points out. "Especially after the exterminations stopped. That was really the main thing people cared about."

"Brilliant observation, Tom." Katie says sarcastically. Fucking hell, why does she have to work with *Tom,* of all people? "Well, what about celebrities? Do we have any new ones? Maybe they'll have a scandal big enough to blow up our views."

"Recently dead celebrities… oh!" He lights up. "I heard most new recruits go to the Hazbin Hotel. The one run by the Princess of Hell. Charlie!"

“Charlie?” Katie scowls. “You mean that horrible pain in the ass actually succeeded? How?”

“I don’t know.” Tom shrugs. “I guess people actually do want to change.”

“Bullshit.”

“Hey, it’s just what I heard!”

Katie drums her red nails on the table, deep in thought. If most people are at this Hazbin Hotel…

…maybe there’s something worth reporting there.

“Let’s use this.” She declares. “It’s time to pay that spoiled brat a visit.”

Strictly speaking, newscasters aren’t allowed to enter private property without permission. Katie may be a demon, but she still has *some* journalistic integrity.

(More importantly, she can’t risk the royal family throwing her into prison. Or whatever the equivalent there is in Hell.)

So she hangs around the outskirts of the Hotel with her camera crew, biding her time. As she impatiently taps her foot against the pavement, Tom turns towards her.

“Should we do a stakeout for the evening?”

“There is no way I am spending the night with you here, Tom.” Katie snaps. She looks around, trying to see if there’s something worth recording - a fight? An indecent affair? Anything?

And that’s when her prayers are answered: an angel walking out from the gates with a bag full of garbage, and a small demon following after her.

Jackpot.

“Excuse me, honey!” She calls out. The angel lifts her head up, her golden eyes gazing at Katie with suspicion. “Could I have a moment of your time?”

It's getting pretty late at night, but Charlie's still hard at work. She's sitting in the parlour with a couple of her new residents, preparing her itinerary for tomorrow.

Okay, so let's have introductions, and guided tours, and trust exercises…

She jots this all down in her notebook, but the thing is, her brain's not really cooperating today. She absentmindedly flicks on the television, hoping some background noise would help.

Unfortunately, the channel is on 666 News. Ew. She's about to switch the station when the words

HAZBIN HOTEL: A DARK SIDE?

pop up on the screen, and Katie smiles maliciously towards the camera. "Everyone knows about the Hazbin Hotel, run by Hell's one and only princess! But did you know there's a nasty side to the hotel?"

"Nasty?!" Charlie squawks indignantly. "What the- huh?!"

"That's right, Katie." Tom chimes in. "She's been exploiting her residents to do her bidding."

"Now, I'd say that's an abuse of her powers!" Katie says, cracking her neck. "But what would I know? I'm not a royal hotshot. Just a humble news anchor! Speaking of news, tonight's special broadcast is an exclusive interview with- you guessed it- two people who work at the Hotel."

The footage switches to a video of Lute and Niffty, and they're both carrying garbage in their hands. Since Niffty doesn't do well on camera, she's clinging onto Lute's leg for dear life, silent as a mouse.

Lute, however, doesn't suffer from the same ailment. "What the fuck do you want?"

"We just had a question for you!" Katie forcefully thrusts a microphone in front of Lute. "What are you lovely ladies doing right now?"

“Huh?” Lute pushes the microphone away, looking visibly annoyed. “What does it look like I’m doing? I’m cleaning.”

The camera zooms in on the trash bag, before going back to Lute’s face. “Now, why would an angel clean down in Hell? Is this a hobby of yours?”

“Who the hell would come down here for *fun?!”* Lute scowls. “It’s my punishment. Now fuck off.”

“PUNISHMENT?!” Katie yells at the camera. “Looks like being at the Hazbin Hotel is a bad thing! A life sentence, filled with unpaid labour. Can you believe that, Tom?”

“I sure can’t, Katie.” Tom returns. “Tune in to this channel tomorrow, where we’ll unveil more of the princess’ lies.”

Katie sends a wink, before the program cuts to a commercial break.

And:

The ad plays a very merry jingle.

And:

Charlie starts to sweat, because her new recruits are staring at her worriedly.

“Is it true?” One of them asks fearfully. “You’re gonna trick us into doing whatever you want?”

“No, no!” Charlie says hastily. “There is no unpaid service here! A good deed will always be rewarded by me! Like… um…”

Oh, crap. Her mind is officially fried from planning today’s excursions, organizing the upcoming days, *and* from listening to the utter bullshit that Katie just said, so she’s unable to come up with a good excuse.

“Tell us this, then.” A resident pleads. “Was that actually a punishment for the angel?”

“Er…” Charlie can’t even deny it, because it is, but there’s not enough context, and how is she supposed to phrase this?

“It’s not what it looks like?” She says weakly.

The answer only makes her recruits more uneasy, based on their expressions, and they all begin heading towards the door.

“Wait, where are you going?” She yells. They walk faster at the sound of her voice, and they pull the door- “No, wait! Don’t-”

-and slam it shut. Charlie groans at this, and she buries her head into her hands.

"Oh, *fuck!"*

The next day, Katie examines a freshly-printed TV viewership report. To her delight, the ratings have increased by 15% after their Hazbin Hotel exposé.

Well. Katie's smile widens. *That gives me an idea.*

Ever since then, it's been an endless barrage of 'news' about Charlie's hotel, and the cameras roll in

3,

2,

1…

MONTH 1:

“The Hazbin Hotel has the most dangerous citizens in Hell!” Katie declares. “Would you trust someone like the RADIO DEMON to actually care about your wellbeing? Even worse, he’s teamed up with our resident king, Lucifer! What could those two be up to?!”

The camera zooms in on Alastor and Lucifer, who are strolling through the streets of Hell; when Alastor turns around, his image on the screen becomes completely distorted.

“Do not record us.” He hisses. The screen starts to flicker until the camera refocuses on Katie, who speaks hurriedly into the microphone.

“So cagey. And so suspicious! What are they hiding? A secret deal? Their own plot to exterminate Hell? More information next time!”

MONTH 2:

“666 News is brought to you by our sponsor, the Casino!” Katie says brightly. “So tonight, we’re doing an extra-long feature on this special business. Now, let’s see what we have around here.”

The news opens up with a shot of the slot machines, before honing in on the backs of Angel Dust and Husk. They’re both dressed in formal outfits, and the camera zooms in on their faces.

“What?! Isn’t that the biggest porn star in Hell? *And* he’s hanging out with an ex-overlord?” Katie yells, voice so loud it draws the attention of everyone in the building.

“The hell? We’re on a fucking date!” Angel Dust grouses. “Besides, if ya wanna record me, it’ll cost you.”

“A ‘date’, you say?” Katie turns to the camera triumphantly. “What a convenient excuse! Well, an anonymous source states that you two have been meeting up in secret. Sounds like

the Hazbin Hotel has their own back-alley crimes!”

“What ‘anonymous source’?” Husk asks suspiciously. Katie intentionally ignores him, and keeps speaking.

“Is the hotel just a front for shady dealings? Or worse? Don’t change the channel, because we’ll have updates at 8!"

Angel Dust sticks up his middle finger, and the programming goes straight to a commercial break.

MONTH 3:

Katie’s next target is Vaggie, whom she ambushes on her way home. “We’re LIVE on the streets of Pentagram City! Looks like we’ve stumbled upon Vaggie, the manager at the Hazbin Hotel. Care to comment on your girlfriend’s business venture?”

Vaggie looks like she’s about to say no- but then changes her mind, her expression determined.

“You know what? I do!” Vaggie grabs the microphone, and stares right into the camera. “Charlie is a hardworking, beautiful person, and you assholes at 666 News are the worst! Spreading lies, just for your own benefit? Go fuck yourself. I can guarantee that there is nothing evil at the Hazbin Hotel.”

Vaggie tosses the microphone back into Katie’s hands, and she stomps away angrily.

“Thanks for your time!” Katie calls out. Once Vaggie turns the corner, Tom nudges Katie.

“What now?”

“Don’t you worry, Tom. We weren’t *actually* live.” Katie sneers. “We’ll edit this later.”

“You had an interview with them?” Charlie says worriedly. As nice of a gesture that is, she’s a little concerned about what Katie has up her sleeve. “Vaggie, thank you, but I don’t know-”

“Wait, look, look!” Vaggie points at the television, where the words

EXCLUSIVE! An interview with Hazbin Hotel’s own manager!

are sprawled across the screen. Vaggie has the microphone on her hands, and the camera focuses on her face.

“Aw, Vaggie! You look so cute! You’re really photogenic.” Charlie gushes, and she can’t help but lean closer to the monitor to watch her. Maybe it’ll turn out well?

Unfortunately, all her hopes are dashed when Vaggie starts to talk. “Charlie is a hard- ass- the worst! Spreading lies… I can guarantee that there is- evil at the Hazbin Hotel.”

Vaggie’s clips are cut in an awkward fashion, manipulated to make it sound worse than it is, but 666 News smoothed it out *just* enough for it to be convincing. They both gape silently at the TV, before Vaggie whirls around in a panic.

“THAT IS NOT WHAT I SAID! I swear!”

“It’s okay.” Charlie says weakly. “Katie will run out of things to say, and she'll eventually stop. Right?”

Spoiler alert:

She doesn’t stop.

MONTH 4:

"Does Princess Charlie actually care about the hotel?" Katie's voice is now, sadly, a familiar sound at the Hazbin Hotel. "Or is it just another way for her to misuse her powers? She's hosted balls for the overlords not once, but *twice!* Sounds to me like she's trying to garner their support. But for what purpose? What do you think, Tom?"

"Who knows?" Tom shrugs. "Even so, she doesn't seem to hold them in high regard. In fact, we heard from several eyewitness accounts that she attacked Vox at his own party!"

"That's right!" Katie crows loudly. "Can you believe this spoiled princess of Hell? Not only does she throw extravagant parties, she even hurts her own guests! She does whatever she wants, whenever she wants, imposing her ego on everyone-"

Click!

Charlie turns the TV off, before facing Lucifer and Vaggie unhappily. "I can't take it anymore! Katie's been spreading all this bullshit for months. What the hell did I ever do to her?!"

"Woah, Charlie, breathe." Vaggie rubs Charlie's back soothingly. "At least we still have new recruits, right?"

"I know, but they always start off by saying, 'hey-I-heard-some-bad-things-about-this-hotel-is-it-true?' And some of them still leave, anyway!" Charlie buries her face into her hands. "Do you think Katie will stop if I ask her to?"

"I, uh… don't think so, sweetie." Lucifer says gently. Charlie doesn't seem surprised, although it's hard to tell with her face still covered.

"Okay, well, I'm looking for suggestions. All ideas are good ideas."

The sound of the radio suddenly fills the air, staticky and muffled, which makes Charlie lift her head up. "Is that Alastor? Are you there?"

"Indeed!" In an instant, Alastor morphs out from shadow, his signature tendrils twitching in the air. "I overheard your little situation, and I have a recommendation for you."

“Really, Alastor?” Vaggie looks at him warily. “Or are you just here to be a smartass?”

“I would never!” Alastor sounds sincere enough, but his gleeful grin gives him away. “I only wanted to say that you should kill her, my dear. That would solve all your problems. It certainly solved *mine* when I was alive, ha-ha!”

Alastor laughs heartily, although Charlie looks appalled by his recommendation. “No, no! Never mind. *Not* all ideas are good ideas.”

“It’s not that I’m supporting Alastor, but… why not, babe?” Vaggie asks. “You’ll never have to worry about Katie again.”

Charlie fixes them with a stern look, like a teacher admonishing her students. “I know, but I can’t just kill her because she’s doing something I don’t like. What would that say about me? That I can’t handle criticism? That I’m silencing people I don’t agree with?”

She taps the TV, albeit with more force than necessary. “It’ll look like I’m abusing my power- which is exactly what Katie has been telling people. Besides, all this footage is real. She’s just twisting everything to make it look way worse.”

Lucifer mulls over this. *Manipulated footage that’s overdramatized. Lies that are technically half-truths…*

He brightens up, and claps his hands together. “Charlie! I know what you can do.”

“You do?” Charlie looks at him with renewed hope. “What are you thinking of, dad?”

“If we want her to stop, we should beat her at her own game.” He proposes. “She loves spreading rumours, doesn’t she? Why don’t we give her one?”

“You want to plant something?” Vaggie says.

“Yeah. Let’s arrange a fake event. Something so juicy that every sinner in Hell will attend, and she won’t be able to resist making up gossip about it.”

Charlie gasps at this. “Oh! And then, once she’s at the venue…”

“… we’ll expose her as a fraud, to everyone! Someone who doesn’t bother fact-checking, and is just there to stir up shit.” Lucifer finishes. “Which will throw everything that she’s said about the Hazbin Hotel into doubt.”

“That’s perfect!” Charlie beams. “It’s not violent, and she can learn the error of her ways. Okay, let’s go with that!”

Lucifer smiles as Charlie starts brainstorming animatedly, feeling pleased that he could assist. Honestly, ever since she’s grown up, she doesn’t need him as much; it’s nice that he can still help her.

“Very good, sir.” Alastor drawls, and Lucifer’s eyes snap towards him. “Seems like that brain of yours isn’t merely decorative, hmm?”

“Hey, at least my mind functions better than yours.” Lucifer retorts. “Your only idea was to murder.”

“It is a perfectly sound idea.”

“It’s a stupid idea.”

“An *effective* idea.” Alastor corrects. They glare at each other, and Lucifer is seized with the urge to beat his ass when Charlie slides in-between them.

“Oh, god. Why do I still have to break up your fights even when you’re dating?” Charlie says nervously. “A-ny-way, thank you, dad, Alastor!”

“Don’t thank Alastor.” Vaggie looks utterly baffled. “He didn’t do shit.”

“You are welcome, Charlie.” Alastor says anyway. Lucifer is about to suggest some other parts to help with Charlie’s plan, but he suddenly senses something.

A feeling of…

impatience.

(stemming from Alastor.)

Lucifer glances over, and he’s a bit startled to meet Alastor’s relentless stare. Once they make eye contact, Alastor pointedly looks away, his deer ears flattening.

Weird. Lucifer thinks. *Very weird.*

So he does what he’s good at: annoying Alastor.

“O-kay, we’re gonna go now!” Lucifer starts pushing Alastor’s back, forcefully shoving him towards the hallway. “I’ll leave you to it. I have something to discuss with this guy, so, buh-bye!”

“Oh- sure thing! Thanks again!” Charlie calls out after him. When Lucifer guides them to a secluded corridor, Alastor peeks at him over his shoulder.

“You are quite pushy. Did it ever occur to you that I might be busy?”

“Busy with what?” Lucifer retorts. “It’s not like you do your job.”

“On the contrary. I’m always picking up the slack of others. Such as yourself!” He jabs a finger at Lucifer’s chest, which he slaps away with his apple cane.

“Yeah, yeah. Pretty sure I’m the one who ends up cleaning your mess, anyway.”

“But you enjoy it.”

Alastor gazes at him, expression smug. Like he’s daring him to say otherwise. Not that Lucifer would, because he does love Alastor due to his faults, his idiosyncrasies, his distinct

mannerisms.*

*Still, does Alastor have to be such a cocky asshole about it?

With some effort, Lucifer manages to change the topic. “So you wanted to talk to me about something?”

Alastor lifts an eyebrow. "What gave off that impression?”

“Uh… isn’t that why you joined the conversation with me, Charlie, and Vaggie?”

Alastor stiffens up for a second, before schooling his expression back to neutral. “Interesting. You are far more astute than I gave you credit for.”

Oddly enough, Alastor’s voice is a little stiff. He’s clearly uncomfortable, his unease palpable in the air, and Lucifer waits patiently for him to speak.

Alastor doesn’t, though. For a long while. Lucifer shifts his weight from foot to foot, feeling like he’s about to choke from All This Quietness, so he settles on something tried and true.

“Oooooh, wait. Is this a compliment exchange?” Lucifer jokes. “That brings me back. Lemme think about what to say for you.”

He pretends to mull it over, making exaggerated thinking noises (hmm, mmm, ahhh….). Just as Lucifer had hoped, Alastor rolls his eyes at his antics. “If it will take you *that* long to think of a compliment, I’d rather not receive it.”

“Aw. Don’t be such a wet blanket.”

“And now you’ve chosen to insult me, instead of offering praise. Marvellous.” Alastor says sarcastically. Regardless, he seems to have recovered, and he leans against his radio cane nonchalantly. “But you are correct. I did want to bring up something.”

“Shoot.”

Alastor’s next sentence catches him completely by surprise.

“We ought to go out tonight. Let’s return to Mimzy’s jazz club as guests, this time. Not as performers.”

“Really?” Lucifer furrows his eyebrows. “Why?”

“Why not?”

They stare at each other, and Lucifer feels vaguely like he’s being quizzed on a test he hadn’t studied for. Confused, and unprepared. Racking his brain desperately for answers that aren’t there.

And then a lightbulb goes off over his head.

Today is 'that day,' right? He thinks. *Must be why he's asking me out.*

"Okay." Lucifer agrees. "Yeah. Let's go."

Once the day slips into

night,

the two of them teleport to Mimzy's jazz club.

It's incredibly busy, packed full of well-dressed patrons, and a jazz band plays a jaunty song onstage. They immediately head towards the bar, and Alastor leans over the counter to grab a bottle of whiskey.

"Uh, don't we have to pay for that?" Lucifer asks, watching as Alastor conjures up two crystal glasses.

"Benefits of knowing the owner, hmm?"

Alastor pours the liquid into the cups, and like clockwork, he snaps his fingers to fill one of them with maraschino cherries. He then wordlessly pushes it to Lucifer; although it's not the first time that Alastor remembers his tastes, it still fills him with a sense of warmth.

Lucifer reaches out to grab the cup, and their fingers brush against each other.

Just for a moment.

Until Alastor withdraws his hand, wrapping his long fingers around his own cup. And it's- why does Lucifer feel so weirdly empty, now that their hands are no longer touching?

"Enjoy your sugar water, your highness." Alastor says wryly. Lucifer places his chin on his hand, trying to ignore the feeling.

"You said that last time, too. What, is this my signature cocktail now?"

"But of course. No one else could drink something so disgusting!"

"Take that back, bitch."

“Ha-ha! No.”

They glower at each other, before turning away in a huff. They both drink from their cups at the same time, like mirror images of one another, and the sound of jazz fills the silence between them. Lucifer drums his fingers to the beat, humming along with them.

The musicians are decent enough, but…

They’re not as good as Alastor and I, Lucifer thinks. He finishes up his cup, and Alastor pours him another one unprompted, topping it off with more cherries.

“You gonna explain why you picked this place?” Lucifer finally asks. “Y’know that I made you a perfectly good jazz club, right?”

He sounds sulky, even to himself, and Alastor looks at him with some amusement.

“Are you upset?”

“No.” He mumbles.

“I thought you weren’t a liar.”

“I’m not.”

“Yet you’re lying again.” Alastor slowly traces his finger around the rim of his glass, and the action is rather hypnotizing.

Strangely…

….seductive.

Lucifer watches and watches and watches, because he has the irrational desire to be the one under his touch- wants Alastor to be doing that to him, instead of that stupid fucking whiskey glass, and-

(it’s there again.)

A feeling of crackling tension, the intense undertow that’s ever-present in their relationship.

“Quit that.” Lucifer finally says, voice slightly winded.

“Quit what?” Alastor replies, but he’s still delicately running his finger around the edge of the glass, just an absentminded motion that makes Lucifer feel like- *fuck, am I really jealous of a cup? REALLY?*- but he can’t control it can’t fight it

so he grabs onto Alastor’s hand. Forcing him to stop.

Perhaps Lucifer was the one to initiate, but Alastor is the one who interlaces their fingers together, hands fitting snugly. It’s just hand holding, and of course they’ve gone much further

than this, but it's such a public declaration that they're *together* together, as though their lives are woven around each other.

"Our first time performing music together was at Mimzy's club." Alastor tightens his grip on his hand. "So I returned here, because I was feeling a little nostalgic. Is that a crime?"

Adorable, Lucifer thinks.

"Oh, I don't think so." Alastor grumbles, and that's when Lucifer realizes he actually said it aloud. "But you do have questionable taste."

"Questionable- you have the worst taste in Hell!"

"Is that so?" Alastor says impishly. "No wonder I am dating *you."*

"You-!" Lucifer groans, because dammit all, he walked right into that one. "Fine. Guess we both have bad taste."

"It appears so." Still, Alastor squeezes Lucifer's hand, indicating that there's no hard feelings.

The jazz band finishes their song, and applause fills the club, but neither of them are really paying attention at this point. All Lucifer really focuses on is Alastor, the way he's sipping at his drink, the warmth of his hand in his, the slightest flush that spreads high across his cheekbones.

Alastor glances down at him, his eyes appraising him carefully. "I did have one other reason why I brought you here. Care to hazard a guess?"

"Oh, yeah?" Lucifer idly swipes his thumb against the back of Alastor's hand. "Actually, I do know why."

"Really? Do tell."

He had figured it out earlier, when Alastor asked him out for the evening. He motions for Alastor to lean down- which he does- and he whispers into his ear:

"Happy anniversary."

Has it really been a year? Lucifer doesn't even know how that had happened. In his long life, years generally blink by like seconds, but this one- this long, wild, roller-coaster of a year- feels like it's lasted centuries, in the best way possible.

A genuine smile tugs at Alastor's lips. "So you did remember."

"Of course." Lucifer leans away to give them both more personal space, even though he doesn't want to, because he's *this close* to doing something inappropriate. "I just didn't expect you to care about that sort of stuff."

"Not usually." Alastor hesitates, before speaking quietly. "And not just for anyone."

“Sap.”

Lucifer says, with affection.

“Fool.”

Alastor responds, with care.

Eventually, Lucifer retracts his hand from Alastor’s grip. Curiously enough, Alastor keeps his arm there, hand still palm-up, like he’s waiting for Lucifer to interweave their fingers again.

“I actually have a lil gift for you. Be right back.”

He hops off his stool without waiting for Alastor to respond, and hurries off.

How strange that Lucifer just left.

Alastor sips at his whiskey, feeling rather put-out. He doesn’t usually mind drinking alone, but tonight, he feels a little antsy, wondering when Lucifer will come back.

I truly have become a sap, Alastor thinks, slightly horrified. He’s a little nauseated at how much he enjoys Lucifer’s presence, but it doesn’t matter. Alastor still wants to see Lucifer. Hear him.

~~*Touch him.*~~

There’s a scraping sound when the bar stool gets pulled, and Alastor lifts his head up. “Ah, your majesty. If you were any slower, you would surely be-”

Except, it’s not Lucifer.

It’s someone he doesn’t recognize- a tall demon in heels and a dress- sitting in Lucifer’s seat. She smiles at him flirtatiously, and Alastor inwardly groans at this.

“You alone?” The stranger asks. She pointedly leans in closer, which makes him veer away from her. “I’ve been told I’m great company.”

“Oh, I highly doubt that.” Alastor says dryly. For some reason, this makes her laugh.

“You’re funny. And freaky-looking, but in a sexy way.” She reaches a manicured hand over, about to touch his arm, but he withdraws immediately. “Aw. Are you shy?”

“No.” Alastor says curtly. He needs to find some way to get rid of her immediately, so he goes for flagrant insolence. “I would rather not waste my breath speaking to you. My time is quite valuable, you see. Unlike *yours.”*

She gasps at this, looking absolutely scandalized, and she hurriedly gets off the seat. “What the- what the hell was that for?”

“Oh, I just need you to leave.” Alastor’s deer ears flatten. “You should know that you’re attacking my ears and my eyes with your presence.”

He can practically hear her grind her teeth from anger. “You’re a dick, you know that?”

“Better than being desperate, like yourself.” Alastor sneers. She looks even more upset now, and she angrily stomps away, unable to retaliate. He idly drinks from his cup, feeling even more annoyed now, because…

She couldn’t retort back. Not many can joust with him verbally. Not like how Lucifer was always prepared with a cheeky quip, accompanied by his mischievous grin.

Where is that imbecile, anyway? Alastor thinks. From the corner of his eye, he can sense someone approach him, and he lets out an irritated sigh.

“If you are back for another round, I shall rip your soul right out from your body-”

Lucifer’s gloved hand touches his knee. Just barely. It’s such a gentle graze, but it makes Alastor’s breath catch in his throat, his thoughts stuttering to a stop.

“You alone?” Lucifer asks, voice rough and lowered. It’s the same line that the girl used, but coming from him… that tone… his heavy stare…

Alastor swallows, the lump in his throat going down uncomfortably, and he forces himself to plaster on an unaffected expression.

“Sounds like you’re interested.”

Lucifer replies, dead-serious:

“Yeah.”

And then he slowly drags his hand up-up-up Alastor’s leg, stopping only once he reaches mid-thigh. Lucifer gently grips on, fingers digging in slightly, yet he leaves fire behind in his every touch.

“I…” Alastor’s eyelids get heavier, “… am actually waiting for someone.”

Lucifer arches an eyebrow. “Is he hotter than me?”

Alastor lets out a snort, feeling rather entertained. Why *is* he playing along with Lucifer's shenanigans, anyway? "Oh, I'd say you're evenly matched."

"Man, really?" Lucifer pouts a little, and now Alastor barks out a laugh, unable to control it.

"You are an utter buffoon. Now, where is my gift?"

"Okay, okay." He relents. "You've been patient for long enough. Drumroll, please!"

Alastor doesn't bother doing it, although it doesn't deter Lucifer. Instead, he pulls his white hat off, and.

Alastor feels all his words dry up in his mouth, and.

All his composure flies out the window because it's Lucifer but it's not just Lucifer it's *Lucifer with deer ears on his head* twitching this way and that, real deer ears not a headband they're real real real real real real real real real real real *real-*

"You…" Alastor says faintly. "You've shapeshifted."

Lucifer's deer ears flick upwards, seemingly pleased by his reaction. "Yeah. I have a tail too, y'know."

Alastor's eyes immediately dart towards his tailbone, and Lucifer tut-tut-tuts at him.

"It's underneath my clooooothes." He sings, tilting his face closer. At this proximity, Alastor could almost kiss him, if he leaned in just one centimetre more, if he pushed in just an itty-bitty-bit he could just-

Alastor stands up so abruptly, his stool falls over behind him. It clatters onto the floor, but he doesn't bother picking it up.

"Come to bed with me." Alastor says urgently. Voice needy. He sounds desperate because he *is,* because he wants Lucifer so much, needs him right now.

"To sleep?" Lucifer asks, but it's not really a question, and Alastor shoots him a long, long look.

"You already know the answer, *Lucifer."*

In his haste, Lucifer had summoned a portal into the music room, of all places.

Their movement is so rushed and hurried, they crash into furniture- hit the drum set, making it clatter cacophonously- and Lucifer accidentally rips the curtains as they're busy kissing, kissing, kissing.

"Oh, crap." Lucifer gasps, breaking the kiss. "We should fix this."

"Like I give a fuck." Alastor snarls, sounding wholly unlike himself, and he dives right back in. Lucifer scrambles to yank off Alastor's jacket, tossing it onto the ground impatiently, and Alastor rips Lucifer's bowtie in one motion.

"You're so hot when you're eager." Lucifer mumbles, lets out a noise when Alastor deepens the kiss, and he feels Alastor's strong arms picking him up by his thighs and dashing quick-quick-quick to the piano, where he shoves Lucifer onto the piano lid.

"Don't get used to it." Alastor boxes him in, arms on either side of Lucifer's head, and his eyes look a little crazed as he stares at Lucifer's deer ears. "But these… I could get used to this."

"You like that?" Lucifer shoots him a wicked smirk. "Shouldn't have expected any less from you. *Bambi."*

Alastor visibly stiffens up, and he sends him a glare. "That nickname is appalling."

"You got cute ears," Lucifer purposefully flicks Alastor's deer ears, "and big eyes. Suits you, don'tcha think?"

"I think you ought to shut up."

Alastor, without a warning, bites down on his neck, making Lucifer gasp- arch his back- evoking his powers instinctively-

and because he's a fucking idiot he launches a *huge-ass fireball,* which ricochets and zig-zags across the room until it smashes into the curtain.

"Oh, shit!" Lucifer yells, panicked. The drapes catch on fire immediately, flames shooting all the way up all at once, and Alastor lets out a deeply annoyed growl.

"Lu-ci-fer…"

"It was an accident!"

"Take some ownership in your life, for once."

"The hell is that supposed to mean, fucker?"

"You know exactly what I mean."

“Well, why don’t you-” Lucifer yelps as the fire spreads even further, and he pushes Alastor off of him. “Never mind! We gotta- the fire-”

Alastor impatiently pulls a fire extinguisher from behind a cello, smothering the fire in mere seconds. “There. Problem solved. Now, where were we?”

“Wait-wait-wait.” Lucifer raises his hand, stopping Alastor from kissing him. “Since when did you have a fire extinguisher in here?”

Alastor looks at him like he’s the world’s biggest moron. “We have already lit this room up twice. It would only be prudent to have it. Now, lie back down.”

Lucifer dutifully reclines on top of the piano lid, and Alastor’s grin grows at the sight.

“Good boy.”

Embarrassment courses through his veins, and Lucifer can feel his face heat up at Alastor’s words. “Don’t- don’t fucking call me that, fuck-”

“Shh.” Alastor places a finger on his lips. “Keep your voice down. Unless you want everyone to hear you?”

Lucifer swallows, his heart hammering against his ribcage. “Isn’t this room soundproof?”

“Certainly. Although…” They both turn to look at the door, which is still open.

“Hmm.” Alastor smirks. “We require privacy.”

He snaps his fingers, and the door slams shut.

“Do you guys hear somethin’?” Angel Dust asks, cupping his hand to his ear. “Like a door being closed.”

“Angel, focus.” Vaggie snaps her fingers at him. “We’re busy brainstorming how to combat Katie, and you’re hallucinating?”

“I ain’t hallucinating!” He protests. But when he listens intently, he doesn’t hear anything anymore. Just silence.

Strange.

Angel Dust shrugs, and turns to look at Charlie. “What’re you plannin’, Charlie?”

They’re all gathered in Angel Dust’s (ex) Investigation Room, where there’s a new bulletin board at the centre. Charlie pins up a picture of the masquerade ball, and she gestures towards it.

“Okay! Since Katie personally attended our masquerade ball, I think something on that scale is the way to go.” She explains. “Any ideas on what?”

“A product launch event?” Vaggie suggests.

“No, we just did that.” Charlie shakes her head. “It would look kinda odd to host one back-to-back.”

“A press conference.” Husk proposes. “We can say we have new expansions to the hotel.”

“That could work, but…” Charlie says hesitantly. “Maybe something more exciting?”

“A BIG PARTY!” Niffty shrieks.

“Yeah, something like that!” Charlie claps happily. “Okay, we’ll say we’re celebrating something. What could be sooo amazing, Katie can’t possibly miss it?”

Angel Dust stares at the bulletin board thoughtfully. The last time he had used one of these was when he was investigating Alastor and Lucifer’s stupid relationship.

Where are those two weirdos, anyway? Angel Dust thinks.

And that’s when he comes up with something so brilliant, he’s impressed by himself.

“HOLD ON! Excitement? A party? I got the perfect idea!”

He pins up a photo of Lucifer (in mid-blink),

a photo of Alastor (completely pixelated),

and connects the two images with red string.

“Let’s get these two hitched! We’ll throw a *fake royal wedding!”*

Chapter End Notes

Ch. 44:
- I'm so happy that people noticed: last chapter I was referencing the Great Gatsby musical (starring Jeremy Jordan), when Lucifer frets all day preparing for Alastor at the amusement park, + when he says "today's THE DAY!"
- The way he asked Alastor to repeat "I love you" over and over again parallels ch. 8! Since they had SUCH a hard time admitting they were friends, I wanted it to be easy when they confessed that they were in love with each other

Fun Facts:
- Lute is working her weekend punishment shift (ch. 44)
- Cameras rolling in 3, 2, 1 is a reference to the song 'Stayed Gone'
- Angel Dust and Husk have been dating since (ch. 40)
- Charlie threw the overlord masquerade ball (ch. 10 + 11) and the Vees' Party (ch. 37 - 39)
- They performed at Mimzy's Jazz Club in (ch. 7 + 8)
- Lucifer's 'sugar water' aka a Manhattan has appeared in (ch. 15/16/37)
- Lucifer made Alastor a jazz club in (ch. 24 + 28)
- Lucifer's fake deer ears are from (ch. 22/23/44) so I figured he should have real deer ears for a change
- They've both had a couple of different people hit on them in public
- Come to bed with me" is a parallel from (ch. 35) bc Lucifer asked him to last time (to sleep) and this time it's… well, it's not to sleep LOL
- Brought back the 'good boy' comment, which Alastor has used on him a few times
- Alastor is slamming the door shut on all YOU readers!!!
- In (ch. 1), they lit the music room on fire, so I had them do it again

IMPORTANT DATES:
- I will post a one-shot on Feb. 21! You'll be able to read here, in my For You: Collection (FYC)
- After conducting polls, you voted for me to post Of Love and Longing (OLAL) on Feb. 28!

No one guessed that it was Katie and Tom as the villains, yay! They had a small role in ch. 9 - 12, and I wanted to wrap up their little story. My QUESTION for you this time is: what do you think will happen at the wedding? The next time I update OSAS will be March 14. And OSAS will be officially done at CH. 47 (so in two chapters). See you then <3

AND OF COURSE HAPPY ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF OSAS!!!!

The Question

Chapter Summary

Previously on OSAS:
-Katie and Tom spread rumours about the Hazbin Hotel for 4 months straight
-Alastor and Lucifer spend their anniversary at Mimzy's jazz club
-Lucifer shape shifts to have deer ears (and a tail!), so they head back to the hotel for some 'evening activities'
-They plan to host a fake wedding to trap the news crew, but they didn't tell Alastor and Lucifer yet

Chapter Notes

CH. 46 FANART:
- comic by: @dirtgrubber + 2 + 3
- comic by: @0-cloud-puff-0
- OSAS memes: 1 + 2

I wanted to share some ONE-SHOT FANART:
- comic by: @0-cloud-puff-0
- drawn by @dirtgrubber: 1 + 2 + 3

I also have OLAL fanart but considering that it's 18+, I will keep it to that fic! I love y'all SO MUCH! If you would like to send me anything, you can find me on my: social media platforms

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Throughout his life, Lucifer's done a lot for Charlie. And of course he would- that's his daughter, for god's sake, anything for his little girl- but *this?*

This really takes the cake.

"Can you, uh… repeat that?" Lucifer motions towards the bulletin board in the centre of the room; there's an image of him and Alastor pinned on it, joined together by red string. "You want us to what?"

"It's no big deal!" Charlie may sound nonchalant, but she has on an extremely tense smile. "Just, you know… pretend to get… married?"

Lucifer's brain.exe has stopped working.

After way way waaaaaay too long, he finally processes her request.

"Me."

Lucifer points at himself, before gesturing towards Alastor.

"And him."

"Well, it ain't gonna be you and *I,* that's for sure." Angel Dust huffs. They're all seated within the Investigation Room, assembled so that they can discuss Charlie's counter-attack on Katie. While he had envisioned many different plans, none of them involved a *sham wedding,* and Charlie looks increasingly pained the longer they don't respond.

"Okay, I know it's a lot to ask, but think about it this way! With such a huge event in the horizon, Katie will definitely come to the hotel. She'll probably spread weird rumours about the wedding, and that's when we can expose her lies in front of everyone! We'll get her, hook, line, and sinker. What do you think, dad? Alastor?"

Niffty hums the melody to the wedding march (daaaa, daaaa, da-da da da da daaaa…) while Lucifer mulls it over. Pretending to get married? It's a manageable task on his end- and if it's all temporary, he doesn't see the harm in it.

He sneaks a glance over at Alastor, but he's already looking at Lucifer's profile, his expression thoughtful. They maintain eye contact for a moment, and somehow, Alastor's gaze seems to convey:

That sounds quite entertaining, wouldn't you say?

Lucifer's face breaks into a smile,

Alastor's grin widens,

and Angel Dust snaps his fingers to get their attention. "Can ya quit makin' goo-goo eyes at each other and focus for sec?"

"You would benefit from learning some manners." Alastor responds. Still, he turns towards Charlie, before placing his chin in his hand. "So you wish to trick everyone in the entire realm of Hell? That certainly seems like a grand display of deceit."

"Is that a yes, then?" Charlie says hopefully.

"Hmm. And what's in it for us?" Alastor asks. It doesn't escape Lucifer's notice that he used 'us' to refer to the both of them, like they're a duo- a set- a *team*. Something that Alastor never would have done before, but now he says easily, as though commenting on the weather.

"Umm…" She lights up when she comes up with something. "Oh! We'll plan the whole thing- you and dad just need to show up on the day of. And, erm… well… you'll… never

have to participate in a trust exercise ever again. How does that sound?”

“Really, now?” Alastor’s deer ears perk up at this. “Those terms are acceptable.”

Without a warning, he places his arm around Lucifer’s shoulder, and pulls him flush to his side. It’s rare for him to initiate such a public display of affection, made even more shocking when Alastor leans in, making it so that they’re just a hair’s breadth from kissing.

“And what is your opinion?”

Alastor lowers his voice, so quiet that only Lucifer can hear him.

“Fiancé?”

Oh,

he feels it, then-

his heart rate picking up so fast, it’s threatening to burst out from his chest; gulps, feels the heat rush to his face, and fucking hell, they’re not actually engaged so it’s not real- not real at all- yet why is Lucifer having such a strong reaction to that word?

“O-okay.” He manages to say, but his voice is soft yet strained, and Alastor’s gaze darts down to his lips for an instant, just a quick, fleeting second-

“Should we leave the room?” Angel Dust drawls, sounding far too gleeful. “You two have gotten really bold now that you’re publicly datin’.”

Lucifer half-expects him to let go immediately, but Alastor only tightens his hold, fingers digging in to his shoulder blade.

“You ought to refer to us as 'engaged.' If we are to keep up this pretence, you really need to learn your lines better.”

“What the- I’m a professional actor! Don’t explain my own job to me!”

“Okay! Great! Thank you so much, you two.” Charlie cuts in, ever the peacemaker. “First rule of business: we’ll have to invite guests! We need tons of people to attend so that it’ll be extra enticing. I mean, Katie will HAVE to come if everyone’s talking about it.”

“Hold on!” Angel Dust says excitedly. “Leave that to Team H.A.R.D. We can get the gang back together!”

Husk lets out an audible groan, looking less than enthused by the idea. “Angel, are you fucking kidding me? I ain’t plannin’ a wedding.”

“Well too bad, ‘cause I need ya.”

“I WANNA DO IT TOO!” Niffty yells. “Let me join in!”

They all start chattering enthusiastically, talking over one another in their excitement; for a fake event, they're putting in far too much thought, and Lucifer's starting to have some doubts about accepting.

"Wait, dad!" Charlie suddenly turns towards him. "One thing. To really sell this, wouldn't Sera be at your, er, *wedding?* Should we invite her?"

Oh, crap. It hadn't even crossed his mind, and a feeling of dread creeps into his body. There's too many factors to consider: the political implications of inviting seraphims down to Hell, the fact that it's not even real…

On the other hand, he can't just *not* tell her. He's deceived her, over and over again; it doesn't feel right to deceive her once more. What is he, some sort of sadist?

"No. I won't invite her, but I'll let her know. I'll give her a call today."

"Wait, sir." Vaggie quickly interjects. "Don't tell her it's fake. You never know who might be listening- especially in public. I wouldn't put it past Katie to record you while you're walking on the street."

Shit. She's right about that, but now what should he say to Sera? *We're throwing a wedding, and you're not invited! Because of reasons. Thanks and bye!*

He wipes a bead of sweat off his brow, his anxiety starting to get the best of him. "Er. Are you sure?"

"Yes, dad. The less people who know, the better."

It sucks, but whatever. He'll come up with something. Lucifer reluctantly nods before getting up from his seat, about to head to the Heaven Embassy-

-but Alastor grabs onto his arm, stopping him in his tracks. "I shall come along. Unfortunately, you require supervision, your majesty."

"I don't need it." Lucifer scowls. "I know how to call someone, douchebag."

"Perhaps. But you may get lost along the way!"

"What the fuck? I'm not a kid, you ass-"

Niffty grabs Lucifer's ankle, distracting him from his tirade. "Alastor just wants to hang out with you, sir!"

"Niffty." Alastor bonks her on the head with his radio staff, looking annoyed. "Be quiet."

"You got it!"

He doesn't deny it, though, and the way Alastor purposefully averts his eyes indicates that Niffy really *did* hit the nail on the head. Oh, hell. At times, he can be surprisingly sweet, showing that he cares in his own, roundabout way. Even though it's hard for him.

Even though he's not used to it.

Lucifer can't help but smile, which makes Alastor squint at him.

"Stop dawdling, and go make a portal, sir."

"Yeah, yeah."

The world is quiet in the Heaven Embassy.

The sunlight streams in through the stained glass windows, tinting the air with soft lilac hues. It's the one piece of Heaven that still remains down in Hell, so clean and pristine it feels rather out of place.

"And we're back." Lucifer says. His voice echoes in the large space, *back-back-back,* and the two of them start walking towards the meeting room.

From up-close, he can see golden ornamentations, decorating the walls of the embassy in celestial patterns.

And in the distance, Lucifer spies the silhouette of an aureate harp. It's the one he made so many months ago, gleaming resplendently under the afternoon sun- still in perfect condition, as though time froze. Preserving their moment, just for them.

"Guess no one's been here since we came." He comments. "The harp's even been left untouched."

"Indeed." Alastor slides his hand over the strings of the harp, *glissando,* and it resounds prettily in the silence. "You taught me a very perfunctory lesson on this instrument. I will have to find a better tutor in the future."

"Hey. You sounded pretty damn good for a first-timer, y'know? I think I did a good job teaching you."

"Hmm. I'd give it one star!" Alastor lifts up his index finger as emphasis. "Some issues include: no follow-up lessons, and I do believe the instructor had unsavoury intentions."

“One star- wait, *unsavoury?!”* Lucifer’s eyes bug out at this. “What the hell did I do?”

“If I recall correctly, I’d say you might have been *groping* me, under the guise of adjusting my hand positions.”

“I- you-” He splutters, feeling indignant. “We were friends! F-R-I-E-N-D-S. I was just being helpful!”

“Ah, yes. From the kindness of your heart, is it?” Alastor leans against the harp, eyes dancing with mirth, and Lucifer can’t come up with a good retort. He just mumbles out,

“Oh, shut up,”

and he takes the opportunity to call up Sera instead. Surprisingly, she picks up after only one ring, and her blurry hologram appears immediately.

“Lucifer? Alastor? To what do I owe the pleasure?” She sounds genuinely delighted to hear from them, which makes what Lucifer’s about to say even more uncomfortable.

“Heeeeeeeeey!” He gives her an awkward wave, heart in his throat, and decides not to beat around the bush. “So, uh, just calling tell you something.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah. Um… You might hear something. And I really don’t want you to- don’t freak out.”

“What do you mean by ‘something’?”

“I… can’t really say?”

She stares at him, looking more confused than anything else. “I’m not sure I understand, Lucifer. You are speaking in riddles.”

“It’s… yeah, it’s complicated.” He winces when he says this, because it’s a terrible non-answer. “Sorry. Just, when you do hear it, don’t panic, okay?”

“Don’t panic?” Sera repeats. She still looks utterly lost, and Lucifer wrings his hands together nervously. Fuck. He’s withholding information from her, *again,* which is not what he wants, but that’s all he ever seems to do with Sera.

His voice breaks a little when he says the next part.

“I can’t tell you right now, but you gotta trust me. Please.”

It’s so quiet, one can hear a pin drop.

Lucifer waits anxiously, unsure if Sera will take that leap of faith, because why should she? Why should she believe in him, when all he ever does is run circles around her, entangling her deeper and deeper into his own mess?

“Lucifer.” Sera eventually says. He braces himself for her admonishment, for her disapproval, for the pain in her eyes.

(For their relationship to sever in half, and this time, be irreparable.)

“I do trust you.”

Like a parachute, those four words lift the weight off from his shoulders. Lucifer looks up at her, and she’s gazing at him gently, her eyes crinkled into a smile. “If you can’t tell me right now, I’m sure you’ll inform me later.”

“R… really?”

“Yes. Of course.”

He wants to cry, but he doesn’t. It’s just, she hasn’t given him this sort of boundless trust since before his fall from Heaven.

Are we actually okay with each other now? Lucifer thinks, feeling a swell of relief. How long has he been dreaming of this? To be accepted fully, to be trusted with blind faith?

“Thank you.” His voice, embarrassingly enough, sounds a little raw. “Well, that’s all that I wanted to say. See you later-”

“Hold on.” Sera raises a hand to stop him. “I have something I’d like to ask, now that you’re here.”

“You… do?”

“Yes.”

That’s kind of odd. Lucifer shares a look with Alastor, before glancing back at her. “What is it?”

It’s Sera’s turn to hesitate, apprehension written all over her face. After some thought, she speaks slowly, like every word is picked out with great care.

“Your daughter’s Hazbin Hotel project has been quite eye-opening for me. It demonstrates that people can learn. Grow. Become better. Which means that if people are capable of change, if you and I are capable of change… Then perhaps we ought to start anew.”

Nothing could have prepared him for what she says next:

“Do you wish to come back to Heaven?” Sera clears her throat. “Permanently?”

Alastor wants to kill her.

He should have done that ages ago, in all honesty- eviscerated her on the spot when they first met- because she's taking Lucifer, stealing him away, grabbing him again and *don't you dare do this to me you wretched creature of Heaven-*

Alastor steps in front of Lucifer to morph into his full demon form, body contorting and snapping into unnatural shapes. He looms over them both in his gargantuan height, and his words drip with hostility as he speaks.

"Oh? Your selfishness knows no bounds. Banishing him from heaven when you disagree with his choices. Bringing him up, just to interrogate him over teatime. And now, abducting him simply because you want to. Who do you take him for?"

His acerbic words catch Sera off-guard, based on the shock in her expression. "Alastor, you… is that the kind of person you think I am?"

"I don't think about you." Alastor says frostily. At this, Sera lets out a haggard sigh.

"I won't make any excuses for my past actions; I can only say that I was doing what I thought was right." She extends a hand towards Lucifer encouragingly. "So, this time, I offer you the choice: would you like to return to Heaven? Or would you prefer to remain in Hell? It's completely up to you."

They both turn to look at Lucifer, who, until now, has remained silent. He's normally quite easy to read, but his face is uncharacteristically stony, and Alastor can't understand what this all means.

"I am aware that it might seem… out of the blue." Sera says eventually. "I know it won't make everything right. But I care for you, Lucifer. And I will do everything in my power to be there for you."

Surely he won't go back up.

But…

This is Lucifer's dream, is it not? He's often expressed melancholy at being banished. Lamented about how much he misses his home. Hell was meant to be a holding cell for Lucifer, a life sentence for going against Heaven.

Alastor feels a coldness wash over him, his hand gripping onto his radio cane so tightly, it almost snaps under his grip. As the possibility of Lucifer accepting becomes more and more inevitable, Alastor comes to the most unpleasant realization.

Who am I, to come between him and paradise?

Alastor, for all his life, has done whatever he wants, whenever he wants. Has killed numerous because he felt like it, and rejoiced in ending their lives.

This time, it's not about him- it's about Lucifer, and what's right for him.

(Alastor can't decide on his behalf.)

He steps aside, and reverts from his eldritch form to his usual state. When he makes eye contact with Lucifer, Alastor's face shutters, and he twirls his radio cane with practiced ease, as though it doesn't matter at all to him.

"Well, my king. You may return to your rightful place. Felicitations! A fitting conclusion for you, wouldn't you say?" Alastor sounds casual- *forces* himself to sound casual- but there's the slightest tremble in his hands, a weakness that he can't stand.

Don't notice this, Lucifer.

~~*Please.*~~

Thankfully, he's looking at Sera, and not at Alastor- which means he's in the clear, for now. "Thanks for the offer, Sera. That's… wow! Not gonna lie, that's something I've wanted for a very long time. And I care about you, too."

He's smiling up at her, eyes soft and grateful.

Which makes Alastor's stomach drop, a heavy weight that sinks to the depths of the darkest waters.

"So," Lucifer continues, "if this were a few thousand years ago, I would have accepted it in a heartbeat."

Suddenly, he grabs ahold of Alastor's hand, and intertwines their fingers together. When he peeks over, Lucifer squeezes their joined hands reassuringly, so disparate in size, yet a perfect fit, nonetheless.

"I'm good, though. I want to be here."

And it's all- he- all the uncertainty is gone, gone and gone and gone, and Alastor can't stop the genuine smile from forming on his face, warm and large and…

"You'll stay?" He asks, voice small. He doesn't even feel embarrassed by the hope in his tone, because Lucifer beams at him, a million-watt smile that puts the sun to shame, staring right at Alastor when he says:

"Of course. This is my home."

“Angel, I fucking hate you.” Husk groans and covers his eyes with his paws. “What kind of dumbass idea is this?”

“Whattaya mean? It’s genius!” Angel Dust retorts. “What do you think, Rosie?”

“I think it’s perfectly romantic, dearie.”

“And I LOVE IT!” Niffty squeals.

“Don’t encourage him!” Husk bellows. “Just look at where we are! Standing in a goddamn *hot air balloon!”*

Sure enough, they’re all crammed together within the basket, and it’s admittedly a tight fit. Angel Dust is the one guiding their path, helping them float serenely over Pentagram City.

“Oh, come on! It’s the perfect way to announce a wedding!” Angel Dust protests. “We’re like cupid or somethin’.”

“This is making me nostalgic.” Rosie says wistfully. “Remember when we tried so hard to get the two of them to date? And now look at them.”

“Marriage! Yay!” Niffty says brightly. “Sort of.”

Angel Dust points towards a huge box on the floor, which is stuffed to the brim with bright red envelopes. “We’ll have time for reminiscin’ later. Now, help me lift this.”

All four of them grip onto the container full of mail, and carefully bring it to the edge of the hot air balloon. Angel Dust counts them down,

“Three,

Two,

One…

GO!”

and they pour out thousands upon thousands of red wedding invites. The envelopes flutter through the sky and over town, showering downwards like a flurry of rose petals.

As expected, curious denizens start to pick up the mail, and Angel Dust takes this as his cue to lift up a megaphone to his mouth.

“DON’T MISS THE WEDDING OF THE MILLENNIUM!” Angel Dust yells. “The radio demon and the King of Hell are getting hitched! See you at the Hazbin Hotel in ONE WEEK!”

Within the crowded street, Vox picks up one of the invitations, and his eyes widen in utter shock.

What does marriage constitute, anyway?

Alastor sits in the parlour, contemplating about it on his own. He’s never given much thought to it, although he’s familiar with the concept: two people get together, and decide to formalize their commitment to one another with a document.

Or a ring, correct?

He lifts up his left hand, before scrutinizing it. It looks the same as usual- red and black, sans engagement ring. Which reminds him of the one that Lucifer has in his trinket dish.

(The ring he *used* to wear, when he was with Lilith.)

Alastor's irritation spikes at the thought, and he clenches his hand into a tight fist. *Perhaps I should replace that. We are getting 'married,' after all.*

He doesn't know why he's taking this so seriously. It's a sham union; merely a trick to deceive others. Despite it all, Alastor can't help but feel a pinprick of excitement, a strange delight in telling everyone that Lucifer is *his.* All his. And no one else's.

Add to the fact that Lucifer chose to stay, to remain by his side… well. Alastor may feel a bit conceited about that fact.

The crackling of the TV distracts him from his musings, but he already knows who is commanding the television.

"You fucker! You're getting *married?"* Vox yells, waving a wedding invite irately. "And you couldn't even be bothered to tell me in person? This shit was just raining all over Pentagram City!"

Ah. Vox. Alastor had almost forgotten about his existence. "I was not aware we had that sort of camaraderie with each other. Weren't you plotting to take me down?"

"That was ages ago. I'm over it now."

"How mature of you to let bygones be bygones. And now, farewell!" He lifts up a hand to turn the TV off, but Vox frantically pounds the screen to stop him.

"Wait-wait-wait! I'm calling to say something! And you're gonna want to hear it!"

Alastor does pause, but he'd rather not talk to him for much longer. "I will give you five seconds. Five,"

"What the fuck-"

"Four,"

"Okay, I just-"

"Three-"

"SORRY!" Vox yells. "I'm… I'm sorry, okay?"

Alastor leans in closer, squinting at him with suspicion. "What was that?"

"I-said-I'm-sorry." Vox speaks quieter this time, so mumbled Alastor can barely hear it. "My bad for trying to fuck with your life. Even though you deserved it."

"Not the most compelling apology." Still, he hadn't expected that from Vox. Alastor glances at him, a bit concerned now. "Did you drink some sort of potion? This is highly unusual for you."

"What kind of a response is that?"

“A reasonable one, I would say.”

Vox lets out a grumble. “Look. We’ve had this grudge for years. And every time I messed with you, it always ended badly for me. I’m tired of dealing with your bullshit, and that princess of yours *did* suggest I apologize. I just wanna get this shit over and done with, so… sorry.”

It’s strange- Alastor has never been fond of apologies. Although, seeing how miserable Vox looks from apologizing almost makes it worthwhile. He drums his fingers on his radio cane, not accepting, but not declining his apology, either.

After a lull in conversation, Vox breaks the silence. “But hey! Seems like I helped you and your boyfriend get together, anyway. Fiancé? Husband? Whatever you want to call it. So maybe you should be thanking me.”

In a weird, roundabout way… Vox was right about that.

(Not that Alastor would admit that.)

“You have some nerve, asking me to thank you.” He rolls his eyes, and decides to toss Vox a bone. “But do bring a gift to the wedding. An expensive one.”

“Hey, I played matchmaker already. I think I’ve done enough for you.”

“Oh? Keep up this attitude, and I will ban you from the premises.”

Lucifer’s lying in bed, holding up something bright in his hand:

his old wedding ring.

It shines a brilliant gold under the ceiling light, and he examines it with some apathy. The sight of it used to fill him with ennui, yearning for a past that’s long gone, but now he barely feels a thing.

Time really does heal all wounds, huh? Lucifer thinks. With a snap of his fingers, he teleports the ring into his old mansion, tucking it away with the rest of Lilith’s pictures. He’s finally moved on; ready to face the future.

And what better way to walk forward, than to commit fully to his (fake) engagement?

“Alright, Lucifer.” He mutters to himself. “It’s just another wedding. Easy-peasy. Charlie will handle the details, and it’ll be over in a flash.”

He’s still a little concerned about the whole process, but it does sound like it could potentially be fun. Or completely outrageous. Even so, at least he and Alastor can throw one final deception for the rest of Hell to deal with.

But if he were to *really* commit to the bit…

He lifts his left hand up, unadorned with anything, and a plan slowly formulates in his head.

A full moon hangs in the sky tonight, so bright and red it resembles a candy apple. Lucifer’s sitting on the rooftop, gazing at the sky to admire the view.

Well. Not exactly.

He’s actually there to psych himself up before meeting Alastor, feeling like a nervous wreck. The thing is, he made a weird choice. He'd even go so far as to say it was A *Very* Weird Choice™. Which is...

Lucifer pulls a velvet box out from his pocket and opens it up, revealing a large, shiny ring. It glints prettily under the moonlight, a beautiful piece of jewelry that he made just for Alastor.

So he created a wedding ring. WHATEVER. Under the guise of getting married, Lucifer wanted to gift him a physical object. Something that marks Alastor as *his*. Hopefully he doesn’t get freaked out by it, or take it the wrong way, because they’re not actually getting married… not right now, but…

Maybe someday, Lucifer thinks. He carefully shuts the box and busies himself with putting it back into his jacket, which is why he doesn’t notice a certain demon, slinking towards him stealthily.

“Evening!”

“ARGH!” Lucifer jolts at the greeting, and Alastor sits down beside him, looking endlessly amused.

“How are you still so skittish? We have been scaring each other for practically an eternity.”

“You caught me when I was thinking!”

“Don’t bother.” Alastor smirks. “You’ll hurt yourself if you keep using your head.”

So he wants to fight, huh. Lucifer can get behind that. “Well, *one* of us has to. Not all of us are carefree idiots.”

“Pot calling the kettle black, sir?”

“So you admit you’re an idiot?” Lucifer says smugly, and Alastor’s deer ears flatten, displaying his annoyance.

“Fuck you.”

“Right now? Gotta say, you’re getting more and more daring.”

Alastor chokes- a rare sight- and he has to hit his chest a few times to clear his throat. Lucifer can’t help but cackle at this, laughing as Alastor glares at him from the corner of his eye.

“Such class, Lucifer.”

“You know it.”

Lucifer pulls his knees to his chest, before glancing at the distance between them. It’s just the slightest gap. Practically minuscule in proximity. He can feel the warmth radiating out from Alastor’s body, can almost lean on him if he tries.

So why isn’t it close enough?

He stares at Alastor’s hand, before Lucifer’s eyes trail towards his thighs. He’s so tall, his legs look a million miles long, and,

as though he read his mind,

Alastor pulls Lucifer into his lap.

He wraps his arms around Lucifer’s torso, bringing him snugly against his body. It feels so good. So right. Instinctively he lays his head on Alastor’s chest, hearing the fast-fast-fast tempo of his heart, *allegro.*

They’ve done much more than this in the past, so he doesn’t know *why* he feels so embarrassed when Alastor absentmindedly strokes his head, running his fingers through his blonde locks. Funnily enough, they both pointedly look at the moon instead of each other, so Alastor must be feeling bashful as well.

“You make a pretty good seat.” Lucifer finally says.

“What a thrilling review. I’m quite touched.”

Lucifer tilts his head up to argue, but he gets ensnared in a kiss instead, Alastor’s soft lips pressing against his. He keens into him, snaking his arms around Alastor’s shoulders as they kiss, and it’s slow, languid, like they’re savouring it- enjoying it- like they have all the time in the world.

Eventually, Alastor pulls back. His lips are so pink from kissing, it makes Lucifer want to go back for seconds. “What were you doing here, all by yourself?”

“I told you. I was thinking.”

“About?” Alastor prompts. That’s as good of a segue as any, so Lucifer slips his hand into his pocket, feeling around for the cubic shape of the box.

“Just… the wedding. I think we’re missing some procedures.”

“Interesting. I am of the same opinion.” Alastor, for some reason, puts his hand into his own pocket, his crimson eyes boring right into his. And Lucifer can feel the anticipation in the air, a tremulous thing, indicating that something is about to happen.

Something…

big.

Lucifer extricates himself from Alastor’s embrace, and before he can talk himself out of it, he gets down on one knee. Alastor’s starting to look very bewildered, and Lucifer speaks, with his heart in his throat,

“Alastor, will you-”

“Marry me?” Alastor presents his own ring with a flourish, a small red one, and it glimmers under the moonlight.

Lucifer’s brain.exe has stopped working.

(AGAIN).

After some time, his mind whirs back into action. Because, what the fuck?

“Sorry- you-” Lucifer clears his throat. “AHEM-HMM-HMM. Did you just propose to me when I’m proposing to you?”

“No.” For some reason, Alastor has a shit-eating grin on his face. “Based on a technicality, I’d say that *I* was the one who proposed. I did say the actual words to you, hmm?”

“Oh, you douchebag! You fucking cut me off!”

“Excuses, excuses. It appears that I am the victor today.”

“You-” Lucifer takes in a deep breath, but his anger is spiking to new levels. “Well, I’m down on one knee. You’re just sitting there. Which means, I proposed to you first.”

“False. I proposed to *you* first.”

“Oh, fuck off and just say yes already!” Lucifer snaps.

“I’d rather not. You are the one who ought to say yes.”

They’re both standing up now, circling each other menacingly. Animosity emanates off of them in eerie waves, and whatever fuzzy/warm/comfy feelings Lucifer has towards him vanishes into sheer hostility.

“I’m gonna kill you. I’m gonna marry you, and then kill you.”

Lucifer’s horns slowly start to extend outwards,

“I’d love to see you try.”

Alastor’s eyes tick into radio dials,

and without another word, they spring right into a fight.

“Are those two fightin’ up there?” Angel Dust squints at the rooftop. Charlie follows his gaze, before sighing happily.

“Oh, I’m sure they’re just bonding, in their special little way.”

“That’s gross, Charlie.”

“Not gross! It’s sweet!” She whips out her notepad, and gestures at it animatedly. “Anyway, we have a lot to prepare for the wedding! Team H.A.R.D will help out, right? We still have to do flower arrangements, cake tasting, and *of course* we need musicians… maybe a string quartet? And-”

“An open bar, with free drugs for everyone?” Angel Dust finishes.

“That’s a, er…” how can she put this lightly, “interesting… idea, Angel, but-”

“I’m kiddin’, toots.” He pauses for a second. “Well. About the drugs part. But keep the alcohol flowing. It’ll get the news crew to lower the guard.”

“Ooh, yes! Of course!” Charlie squeals. Barring the fact that it’s a charade thrown to trick Katie & Co., Charlie’s having the time of her life with wedding planning. Maybe the Hazbin Hotel could operate an event planning service on the side. “Speaking of news, do you think Katie will come to our event?”

“Don’t ya worry. We delivered those invites allllll over town. Ain’t no way she’s gonna ignore that.”

“Did you hear? Lucifer and Alastor-”

“I’m definitely going to that wedding-”

“Damn, I can’t miss it! Next week, right? Gotta get a new outfit-”

The town is absolutely abuzz about the upcoming nuptials at the Hazbin Hotel, and no matter where Katie goes, she can’t escape hearing about it. She even has the monogrammed invite in her hands, which she reads over carefully.

However…

The more she analyzes the RSVP description, the more suspicious she feels.

“Katie, you look awful.” Tom remarks. They’re walking together to go to the news studio, and she whirls around to glare at him.

“Well, Tom. *You* look like a piece of shit.”

“I meant- I thought you’d be happier about getting an invite to the Hazbin Hotel. And it’s even a wedding! It’ll be the talk of the town!”

“No shit, Tom. But think about it this way. Why would they host something so last-minute?”

“Isn’t it just because they’re in love, and they wanna tie the knot as soon as possible?”

She flicks him on the forehead, and he yelps at the impact. “Don’t be an idiot. They’re getting married in a week! Most people take longer than that to plan anything. And they’re even inviting everyone over for the event. It’s far too juicy- especially when they know that we’ll be in attendance. Which can only mean one thing.”

She waits for him to put two and two together, but he just stares at her blankly. Katie lets out a deep sigh; does she really have to spell out everything?

“It’s not a real wedding.”

“Ohhhhhhh, shit.” He lets out a long whistle. “Should we not go, then?”

“Of course we’re going to go. They’ve delivered something far, far better for us.” Katie’s grin widens. “We’ll show everyone that it’s fake. We’ll get evidence that they’re not actually getting together. Even if we can’t find proof, we’ll just make it up, and reveal that it’s one giant hoax. C’mon, Tom- this is going to be the scoop of the century!”

Chapter End Notes

Fun Facts:
- I missed Team H.A.R.D so here they are as the wedding planning team
- The Heaven Embassy and the harp is from (ch. 17)
- Wrapping up the Sera/Lucifer story: throughout this fic, she’s been prickly, and feeling suspicious of Lucifer’s motives. She’s accused him of plotting evil things, and now she’s feeling sorry for her actions, and trusts Lucifer now. I wanted to mend their relationship.
- He's lied to her about a lot: when they were trying to bring back Niffty after she got kidnapped (ch. 18-20), pretending that he and Alastor were on a date (ch. 24/25), hiding the fact that Lute was the culprit (ch. 42)
- Sera brought him up to Heaven to ask him questions in (ch. 24/25)
- Since Lucifer fell to Hell unwillingly (in canon), I wanted him to choose to stay, because not only does he love Alastor and his family, he’s grown to enjoy what Hell has to offer.
- Lucifer saying “this is my home” while staring at Alastor is because “home is where the heart is”, and so ALASTOR IS HOME TO HIM NOW
- Wrapping up the Vox/Alastor story: throughout this fic, Vox has been plotting Alastor’s downfall because he’s bitter and angry about their past. But every time he does something, he just drives Alastor and Lucifer closer together. Now, Vox has decided to take the healthier route lol

- Charlie suggested that Vox should apologize in (ch. 40)
- Lucifer's old wedding ring is from (ch. 8), he took it off then
- Alastor confessed he likes Lucifer first (ch. 25), Lucifer confessed he loves Alastor first (ch. 44), so I figured they should propose to each other at the same time!

My QUESTION for you is: uh-oh, Katie found out it's fake and will use it against them! Whatever shall they do? The FINAL CHAPTER is on April 11! I expect it to have a monstrous word count, so enjoy!

In the meantime, you can read Of Love and Longing on Mar. 28. I also wrote a new one-shot, which you can find in my For You: Collection. Thanks always and see you soon!

The Promise (Finale)

Chapter Summary

Previously on OSAS:
- They call Sera, and she asks if Lucifer would like to come back to Heaven, which he politely refuses
- Team H.A.R.D rides a hot air balloon, and invites all of Hell to come to the wedding
- Vox apologizes to Alastor and decides to attend the wedding (with Alastor telling him to bring an expensive gift)
- Alastor and Lucifer 'propose' to each other at the same time
- Katie and Tom realize that it's a fake wedding

BEFORE YOU READ:
- Chapter title: The Promise refers to ch. 1, and (Finale) refers to the last song in Hazbin Hotel Season 1
- I formatted this chapter so that it looks like a wedding schedule/itinerary. Enjoy!

Chapter Notes

FANART:
- comic by: @dirtgrubber + 2 + 3
- and also this one!
- comic by: @0-cloud-puff-0
- drawn by: @poisonedbeyondrepair
- comic by: @mizuwolf7

And here's a link to all ~300 pieces of fanart that you've made for this story! I LOVE YOU

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"It's on, it's on!" Charlie yells. Everyone sits down to watch as the TV flashes the words,

SPECIAL PROGRAMMING @ 666 NEWS!
HELL'S HOTTEST DILFS, GETTING HITCHED?

Alastor squints at the screen. "What does that acronym mean?"

"It's, um… better if you don't know." Charlie feels a bit squeamish at the thought of *anyone* calling her dad a DILF, but she soldiers through. "Look! Katie's reporting on the wedding!"

“Course she would. Ain’t no way she’d let something this big slide.” Angel Dust mimes zipping his lips. “Now shush.”

“Good evening, sinners!” Katie says brightly. “We’re here to talk about the only subject that matters: the upcoming marriage between Hell’s most powerful sinner, Alastor, and good-boy-gone-bad, Lucifer!”

“This is the biggest event we’ve ever witnessed in Hell!” Tom chimes in. “Will you be attending, Katie?”

“Of course I will, because it looks like everyone is invited to the royal wedding. Can you believe such generosity?” She smirks knowingly at the camera. “Because I can’t. In fact, my sources say…”

It’s happening! Charlie thinks, biting her nails with anxiety. *She’s falling for our bait! Once she says some wild rumour, we can debunk her fake story in front of everyone at the wedding, and reveal that she’s been lying this whole time!*

“…that… it sounds like it’ll be a happy celebration!” Katie finishes. “What a beautiful occasion. Do you know what you’ll be wearing, Tom?”

“Probably something that matches with you, Katie.”

“Over my dead body!”

As the two continue to banter, Charlie blinks in confusion, because what? Why is Katie being so pleasant all of a sudden? Where are the lies, the gossip, the snarky backhanded compliments?

“But y’know, Tom, I have a hunch.” Katie motions for the camera to zoom in, and her eyes look particularly menacing from up-close. “Just between us, this wedding is not what it seems. In fact, it appears to have layers upon layers. And I don’t mean the wedding cake.”

“I’m not sure I’m following, Katie. What sort of layers?”

“We’ll reveal a tell-all for next time, on 666 News! Enjoy your little wedding, princess, because we’ll be there to record every moment, LIVE.”

After that ominous piece of foreshadowing, Katie plasters on a fake smile. “Alright! Next up, the weather! Acid rain, as per usual, and-”

Charlie mutes the TV, feeling completely unsettled.

“That was weird.” Vaggie comments.

“Yeah. After all these months of spreading awful rumours about our hotel, she barely says anything about the wedding, except that it sounds beautiful?” Charlie wrings her hands together uncomfortably. “And what does she mean, ‘layers upon layers’?”

“Charlie, Charlie, Charlie.” Alastor’s voice causes her to look over, where he shakes his head condescendingly. “Have you learned nothing? You are *far* too naïve for your own good.”

Although she’s a little offended by his words, she’s still curious about what he means. “About what?”

“You do realize her implication, don’t you? If she’s saying that this wedding is not what it seems, I believe that she’s already found out about our plan. You have failed before you have even begun. What a riot!”

As Alastor cackles gleefully, Charlie fists a handful of her hair, groaning in dismay, because… he’s right. Fuck. How could her scheme go awry, *again?*

“NOOOO! Are you serious? Well, now what are we going to do?” Anxiety bubbles up inside her, and it makes her prattle on at a breakneck speed. “We can’t just un-invite everyone- maybe I can ask her to not to film it? Shit- she’s going to win over us, again- what’s the point of doing this at all-”

Vaggie grabs onto her hand, her eyes full of concern. “Charlie! It’s fine! Look, we just need to put our heads together, and come up with something else. Right? We’ve always had to change things up on the fly. What’s one more setback, huh?”

As Vaggie smiles at her reassuringly, Charlie smiles back, feeling a little better. Vaggie’s always been the best at calming her down.

“Okay. Okay! You’re right.” She turns to address everyone with newfound determination. “So… let’s all brainstorm together.”

~~After an hour~~

~~two hours~~

three hours of planning, they finally do it. Something that will trap Katie, once and for all. Charlie wipes the sweat off her brow as she examines their ideas, arranged haphazardly on the cork-board; can they really pull this off? Because the key to this whole thing is…

“Dad, will you contact Sera today?”

Lucifer looks less than pleased by the idea, but he nods reluctantly. “Okay, yeah.”

“Thank you! Alright, we can do this. I know we can!”

“You don’t know that for sure, Charlie.” Angel Dust lifts an eyebrow. “I mean, what if somethin’ else happens at the party?”

“Then we’ll IMPROVISE!” She says (with a tad too much enthusiasm). She needs to keep morale up, so she stretches her arm out in front of her. “Treat this as a team bonding exercise! Everyone, put your hands in.”

They all huddle together to stack their hands atop of each other, save for Alastor- until Lucifer pulls at his red sleeve impatiently.

“Oh, for fuck’s sake. Would it kill you to be a little cooperative?”

“Would it kill *you* to be more courteous?”

Still, Alastor gingerly puts his hand on top of Lucifer’s, and Charlie beams at them.

Alastor, and Lucifer, working together.

They’ve come such a long way, haven’t they? She thinks, a little misty-eyed. She composes herself, before loudly declaring,

“We’re the Hazbin Hotel, and that means we can do anything, as long as we’re together! So, three, two, one… BREAK!”

Once they finish reporting for the day, Tom swivels to look at Katie. “You know, Katie, I think you were laying it on a little thick. Won’t they realize something is up?”

She smacks Tom’s head - “OW!” - and scowls at him. “Shut up, Tom. You’re overestimating that Charlie girl. She’s so pathetic! We’ve been beating her for months, and all she ever does is roll over. Do you really think her pea-sized brain can come up with anything to stop us?”

“Well, when you put it that way…”

“Exactly. She’s just a weakling. We don’t need to take her seriously!” Katie cackles. “Now, quit bitching and go get our crew ready for the wedding. We have a lot of things to prepare, after all.”

RSVP

You are cordially invited to Hell’s Royal Wedding!

Will you be attending? Please Select:

Yes, or Yes

So the fated day has finally arrived.

Alastor stares at himself in the mirror, feeling a little wrong-footed. To really sell the charade, Charlie and her merry crew (the self-proclaimed Team H.A.R.D) had fashioned them wedding outfits, which he currently has on.

Except…

It’s not what he would usually wear.

The three-piece tuxedo is pinstriped, lined with white and red, and there’s a pink magnolia pinned to the lapel. Some other strange accessories include:

a heart-shaped monocle,

(why?)

an apple bowtie pin,

(to symbolize Lucifer, he presumes)

and a snake arm cuff. All in all, it's an elegant enough attire.

But that idiot group *also* provided a gold crown, which has a ridiculously long veil attached to the metal.

He turns it over in his hands, watching as the crimson veil tumbles towards the floor. The sight reminds him of when Lucifer had bestowed him a coronet in heaven, just a few months ago. A nostalgic, yet embarrassing moment as well, because…

How was he supposed to foresee what his afterlife would spiral into?

To love, and to be loved, Alastor thinks. *What a strange weakness. Practically a mad affliction, really.*

There's a hesitant knock on the door, which distracts him from his musings. It's not a surprise when it's Lucifer's voice that calls out,

"Hey, slowpoke. You ready? They're all waiting on your ass."

"Is that how you greet your betrothed?" Alastor drawls. "I'm swooning."

"Yeah?" He says hotly. "Then why don't *you* say something romantic? Sweep me off my feet, busboy."

Silence. Alastor's not sure what to even say, actually, his mind drawing a blank, because he's not a natural flirt- he's quite the wordsmith, of course, but to be commanded on the spot like that is a bit-

"See? Harder than it looks!" Lucifer sounds far too smug, and Alastor shoves the door open in irritation.

"Well! If that's how you want to play it-"

Alastor stops.

Stares.

And really drinks in the sight of him; they're dressed in similar outfits, as per usual, although Lucifer's in red-black-red-black, his scarlet veil cascading over his shoulders gracefully. There's a crown on his head instead of his signature top hat, somewhat antler-shaped, with hearts adorning the circlet.*

*At the very least, that explains why Alastor's monocle is in the form of a heart.

It's not a real wedding, *it's not it's not it's not it's not,* but Lucifer cuts a fine figure in his suit, and for some godforsaken reason, the lyrics from sappy love ballads slot into place:

♬ *You know someone said that the world's a stage*
and each of us must play a part
Fate had me playing in love with you
as my sweetheart…♭

He waves the melody away in his mind, annoyed with himself. Utterly vile, really. He doesn't even know how he knew of that song- Niffty must have played it for him, some time ago.

"You're in red." Alastor finally says. "Quite the improvement!"

"And you're in white." Lucifer sends him a half-smile. "You look way better like this."

"A compliment exchange? Looks like we're embarking on our deals today, hmm?"

"Not a deal." Lucifer immediately corrects.

Before giving him a Very Obvious Once-over, and his smile twists into a smirk.

"Actually, if we're gonna do our *promises…"*

Without missing a beat, he throws his arms around Alastor's waist, and pulls him into a hug. He's nice and warm, fitting perfectly against Alastor's chest, like always.

"Here's the hugging one." Lucifer murmurs. He tilts his head up, gets on his tip-toes and waits expectantly. "Annnnnnd, the kissing one?"

It's endearing, hopelessly so, but Alastor can feel himself get a little swept up in the moment, wanting to pull Lucifer into his bedroom to do something else…

So Alastor puts a finger on his lips.

"Ah, ah, ah." He tuts. "It's *one* kiss a day, sir. You may claim it at the altar."

"Man, you're no fun." Lucifer sulks, but he lets it slide. He drops his hold on Alastor to conjure up a portal, and it shimmers prettily in the air, a golden flicker of light. On the other side, he can see the final preparations for their wedding day, and it's a hectic tornado of activity.

Lucifer extends a hand out to him. "You ready for our final show?"

"Of course. I'm a natural performer, after all. Although I have some doubts about your abilities, Lucifer."

"Ha, ha. Just shut up and watch me, bitch."

Alastor accepts his hand, and they walk through the portal- ready to face the future, together.

“Oh, golly.” Lucifer whispers.

“That’s a bit of an understatement.” Alastor replies.

And what else could they do but stare at the newly-decorated Hazbin Hotel?

Charlie’s team had completely transformed the venue, and everything is so lavishly opulent that it makes Lucifer feel a little ill:

A) Red, black and white flower arrangements at every corner
B) Grand chandeliers hanging from the ceilings, with oodles of ruby crystals
C) A philharmonic orchestra consisting of 100 musicians on stage
D) Tables upon tables of food, catered by the best company in Hell
E) Fully stocked bars with champagne fountains, accompanied by caviar mountains

The real cherry on top, however, is the outrageously over-the-top wedding cake at centre stage. It’s about as tall as Alastor, and they both stare at the white icing with some trepidation.

“Dad! Other dad!” Charlie runs over to them with a clipboard in her hand, and a headset around her neck. “Looks great, right?”

Lucifer yanks at his shirt collar uncomfortably, finally feeling the full brunt of it all. It’s happening. It’s really, really happening.

Can they actually pull it off?

“Um, Charlie, dear…” Lucifer swallows. “Isn’t this a bit, er, much?”

“Gettin’ cold feet before your wedding?” Angel Dust swoops in out of nowhere; he’s also wearing a headset, and his voice echoes when he speaks into the microphone. “Don’t be such a cliché, short king. We’re about to welcome everyone in, so get to ya places.”

“On it!” Charlie links an arm with Angel Dust, and the two of them walk away, poring over her clipboard one last time.

The hotel guests- the ones who have joined in on the path to redemption- also help assist with decorating. Lucifer doesn't actually know any of them at this point, except for the Niffty demons, and they're all trailing behind Niffty herself. Like a row of goslings, following after their mother goose.

As everyone else rushes to set up the finishing touches, he and Alastor are the only ones remaining in front of the wedding cake.

It's quiet, where they're situated. The eye within the storm.

After a few seconds, Alastor leans in to examine the frosting. "Hmm. It is missing a little something."

"The what- the cake?"

"Indeed." Alastor snaps his fingers, and he materializes something in his hands, two somethings, and they're…

the rubber ducks that Lucifer had made for him. He places the ducks right at the top of the cake,

one Lucifer-shaped,

one Alastor-shaped,

and they look right at home together.

"Flawless, wouldn't you say?" Alastor says cheerily. "It is a celebration for us, after all."

He looks so satisfied by his own actions that Lucifer has to stifle a laugh. How could a demon/sinner/overlord like Alastor be this *cute?* It's got to be one of the mysteries of the world.

"So you did like those ducks. I knew it!"

"Oh, I'd consider them adequate."

"Adequate? That's a funny way to say perfect."

"Ha! You think much too highly of yourself, your majesty. I merely tolerate them."

"Ha-ha! I can see right through you when you're lying."

"Ha-ha-ha! Between the two of us, you are the worse liar."

"Ha-ha-HA! So-"

"SHUSH!" Angel Dust barks at them, effectively ending their argument. "Quit yellin'! The doors are opening now!"

Time: *5:00 pm*
Event: *Guests Begin Arriving*

Did the entire population of Hell really decide to attend their ‘wedding?’ Because it certainly feels that way.

Alastor barely recognizes anyone- save for Rosie and Mimzy, who had clocked him the moment they entered. They had whisked him away to an unoccupied table, forcibly separating him from Lucifer, and now he has no idea where he could be.

I will find him later, he thinks absentmindedly. *He can’t possibly be that far-*

“Alastor, are you even listenin’?” Mimzy gestures angrily, and her champagne splashes all over the floor. “I’m trying to complain to you here! Why didn’t you invite me as your Best Woman?”

“You also could have picked me.” Rosie chimes in. “Or perhaps arranged a little bridesmaids situation? That would have been fun too!”

He really doesn’t care about the wedding party in any way, but they both seemed oddly irate about it. “Rosie, you *did* have a hand in the wedding planning. If you wanted to be the Best Woman, you simply could have assigned it to yourself.”

“It’s not the same, dearie. I was waiting for you to ask me.”

“Yeah, Alastor.” Mimzy pouts. “Where’re your manners?”

He feels strangely cornered by their piercing glares, and Alastor looks around for a distraction; luckily, he sees Charlie in the distance, her blonde hair unmistakeable even from afar.

“Duty calls!” He says airily, and makes a beeline towards her. Charlie lifts her head when she hears his footsteps, and she waves at him.

“Alastor! Can you believe all the guests who turned up? I mean, we’ve got the seven sins… the Goetia family… and, wait.” Charlie squints. “Are those the Vees?”

He looks over as well, and it certainly is the Vees (such a terrible trio), all gussied up in extravagant outfits. They may have chosen to maintain peace between each other, but Alastor

still doesn't want to greet them.

So he decides to play dumb.

"Who?"

"You can pretend all you want, Alastor, but I know you see them."

They both watch as the Vees make their way to the gift table, where they drop off an oversized box. It's the largest present by far, as well as the gaudiest- the wrapping paper is bright red, with a cobalt blue ribbon tied around the outside.

"Woah!" Charlie looks at him. "We should probably check that out. What if it explodes during the ceremony or something?"

It's a bit farfetched, but at the same time… not *completely* unreasonable.

They make their way over to the table; once they arrive, Alastor carefully rips the packaging open, only to reveal a box full of-

"Cameras? Microphones? Headphones, and a tripod?" Charlie sifts through the contents, confused. "But why?"

There's a typed-out note at the bottom of the package. Alastor picks it up, and the letter states:

Radio is dead, idiot. At least make a video podcast or something. -Vox
Or you can film a sex tape! Drop it off at the V Tower, and I'll give you two some money. -Valentino
I really don't give a fuck what you two decrepit old men do, but I'm offended that you didn't buy your wedding suits at my shop. -Velvette

"What a nice gesture! Kind of?" Charlie says uncertainly. "I mean… I dunno. What do you think, Alastor?"

He drops the note back into the box, feeling a bit miffed. "I think he is intentionally trying to vex me, giving me a gift I won't use."

"Riiiiiiiight. You don't like being on camera."

"To put it lightly."

In the back of his mind, Alastor is aware that it's an exceedingly expensive present. All of these electronics were state-of-the-art, based on the advertisements around town. So Vox really *did* take his words to heart, bringing him a pricy wedding gift.

"Do you want me to kick them out?" Charlie asks. "Because I can! We don't need them here, anyway."

The idea is a smidge enticing, but Alastor shakes his head, albeit with reluctance. “No need. Water under the bridge! Vox extended an apology, strangely enough. Which he insinuated was your suggestion, Charlie.”

“Oh my god!” She squeals. “See? ♫ It starts with sorryyyyyy! That’s your foot in the doorrrrrrr♪-”

Alastor tugs her cheek, shutting her up. “Quit that, my dear.”

“Okay, dad two.”

“And do not call me that either.”

“Alright, father- O-M-G.” Charlie immediately turns away, trying to hide her face. “Don’t look, but Katie and Tom are coming over right now.”

“Was that not the point of all,” Alastor gestures around broadly, "this?”

“I know, but I don’t think I’m like, mentally ready? Or emotionally ready? Or, um, physically ready? Just in any definition of the term, I-don’t-think-I’m-ready-Alastor-oh-god-”

Ready or not, Katie and her crew are already in front of them, and Charlie stops her babbling to plaster on an uncomfortable smile.

“Hiiiiiiiii, Katie.”

“Hi there, princess. Looks like your party is in full swing!” Katie thrusts her microphone in front of Charlie’s face. “How about a few words for our audience?”

“NO! No thank you!” Charlie squeaks. “You didn’t want to take the night off? You don’t need to record *everything*... do you?”

“We’re always on the job. Not everyone has time to goof off like our royal family.” Katie lets out a peal of laughter, cold and insincere. “But you’re not the main dish tonight, anyway. Where’s the other half of this unholy union? The head honcho himself. Lucifer!”

Her gaze suddenly diverts towards Alastor, and she sounds far too gleeful when she says, “Trouble in paradise already?”

Alastor has half a mind to tear her to shreds. It would be so simple, so easy…

But they do have a plan, after all.

“Oh, he’s far too busy to speak with the likes of you.” He sneers. “Although, you are free to beg for an interview. Perfect for someone of *your* status, wouldn’t you say?”

She narrows her eyes suspiciously,

Alastor’s shadow leaps out from his back,

and Charlie shoves a glass of champagne into Katie's hand.

"HERE! Um, we have an open bar today. So take as much as you want."

Katie lifts up the glass to examine it, her expression distrustful. "I only drink top-shelf stuff, honey."

"We only have the best of the best! I guarantee it!"

She takes a cautious sip from her champagne, before polishing it off in one go. "Not bad. Well, since you're both being completely boring, we'll leave you here. Tom, fan out. Let's get some better shots of this hotel."

They disappear as quickly as they arrived, and Charlie lets out a sigh of relief. "Ohhhh, god. Do you think our idea will work?"

"The odds are quite slim."

"That's not very reassuring, Alastor."

"Then I will say they are very slim."

"That's *worse!"*

Time: *6:00 pm*
Event: *Cocktail Hour*

Good thing this shitty hotel has alcohol, at least.

Katie reaches for another crystal flute from the champagne tower, admiring as the bubbles float upwards serenely. Since the Hazbin Hotel crew is so gullible, she might as well have some fun on the job, right?

"Okay, you jackasses." Katie addresses Tom & Co. "Here's the plan of action. Tom, I'll have you trail behind the 'happy' couple. You, cameraman, follow after that porn star and his cat pimp boyfriend. I'll go after the annoying princess."

“What do you want us to do, though?” Tom asks.

“You have a phone, don’t you? Go video record their conversations.” She pulls out her phone to demonstrate. “We’ll manipulate whatever footage we can find, so that we can expose this wedding as a sham! And I’ll come up with a headline that’s so juicy, it’ll completely ruin their reputation. Our channel will be trending for weeks.”

Tom balks at this. “But Katie, that’ll open us up to all sorts of liabilities. I mean, sure, it’s Hell and all, but we’ve only managed to avoid any trouble because… everything we’ve reported has been on public property.”

“Don’t be such a fucking coward, Tom.” Katie finishes her drink, and grabs another one. “We need to keep the news cycle up and running. Which means that we’ll do whatever it takes to get more views. So just do your *goddamn job* before I rip your dick off.”

Time: *7:00 pm*
Event: *The Runaway Groom*

The party is in full swing, but Lucifer’s not inside.

Honestly, he had escaped via the window when everyone started entering, because… it had been too much. There were too many people, prying eyes, cacophony, noise and scents and-

Yeah. Definitely too much.

He’s soaring in the air to clear his head, and the night sky is perfect today; not a single cloud in sight. There’s only a sliver of a moon hanging in the horizon, glowing a rosy pink. He feels calm in the solitude, but at the same time, he can’t help but think it’d be better if…

Alastor was by his side.

“That’s mushy.” Lucifer mutters under his breath. “Man, I’m really gross.”

But it’s true, isn’t it? The idea that nice moments would feel nicer if Alastor were there, because it would make a good thing even better? It’s the crowning touch, the icing on the cake, the pièce de résistance.

“Again, gross.” He mumbles.

He hadn’t meant to leave Alastor behind in the party. The guests had surged in like crashing waves, and they got separated in the tide, washed up onto opposite shores.

It might be time to go back, anyway. He had spent far too long outside, adrift and alone. His absence could raise questions from the guests.

With that in mind, Lucifer flaps his wings, flying until the hotel comes into sight. He’s about to head in-

but hesitates.

Instead, he sits on the balcony’s railing, and tries to check on the party through the window. Is it going smoothly? Is everyone having a good time? Do they suspect anything?

Unfortunately, a thick curtain is draped over the windows, making it impossible to see what’s happening. Just his luck. The only indication that an event is occurring is the sound of music, the dulcet melody drifting through the air.

He rests his chin on his hand, thinking. There’s a small voice in the back of his head, reminding him of the last time he had fled during a party:

You ran away during the masquerade ball. And Alastor was the one who found you.

Odd, isn’t it? The way that they’re drawn to each other, like moths to a flame. It’s always been like that, even when they weren’t lovers, weren’t friends. Just two enemies, forced to coexist.

And now he’s spent the majority of his time alone, thinking about Alastor. Which indicates that he should just succumb to his desire, doesn’t it?

“Alastor.”

His voice is barely louder than a whisper.

But in an instant, Alastor appears.

“Ah, your majesty.” He does an exaggerated bow, his red veil draping around him as he moves. “I see that you have summoned me. You really are such a tyrant.”

“You say that, but you still showed up.” Still, Lucifer can’t help but smile. “You didn’t have to.”

“Why, how could I ignore an order from the King himself?”

“You ignore what I say all the time!”

“Only if you’re speaking nonsense. Which is quite often.” Alastor leans on the railing beside him, before turning to look at his profile. “Is there a reason you’re out here, instead of in

there?”

“Not really. Just wanted some air.”

“How peculiar. You are aware that oxygen exists within the hotel?”

“Aren’t you funny today, wise guy. You should sign up for an open mic night.”

“And what, exactly, is an ‘open mic’?”

“It’s- uh… nothing important.”

The wind picks up, and both of their veils dance in the air, the sheer material billowing out elegantly. Alastor studies him, gaze oddly penetrating…

and then the music from the orchestra shifts into a jaunty tempo. It's a little muffled, since it’s coming from inside the hotel, but still audible.

“I haven’t heard this song since I was alive.” Alastor’s deer ears perk up. “Such a treat!”

“This one?” Lucifer listens intently, and picks up on the 4/4 time signature (a 1, 2, 3, 4). “Oh, hey. I recognize it.”

“You do?” Alastor sounds incredulous. “Impossible.”

“What d’you mean, *impossible?”*

“Someone with your awful music taste couldn’t have possibly heard this tune.”

“Hey!” He replies hotly. “I listened to it when I was learning the dances- the ones from the early 1900’s. So yeah, I do know this song. Suck on that!”

He crosses his arms, daring Alastor to argue with him again, and of course he does:

“Prove it.”

Lucifer blinks, confused. “Prove… what?”

“Prove that you know all the dance styles from the 1900’s, sir.” Alastor extends a hand out to him mockingly. “You claim to have studied it, but I have my doubts. We’ll consider this as our first dance for the *wedding,* hmm?”

Lucifer hops off the railing, and he grabs onto Alastor’s hand with more force than necessary. “FINE! I’ll show you!”

They glare at each other, and once the music shifts to a new stanza, they commence, beginning with the Charleston;

and then the Lindy Hop;

the foxtrot;

the shimmy;

the tango.

Seamlessly switching whenever the music score changes, and they even venture into tap dancing-

-until Alastor finally stops dancing, his breathing a little erratic. He places a hand on his chest, like he's trying to catch his breath, and Lucifer cackles gleefully.

"Aww. Is the big, bad radio demon out of stamina?"

"No," Alastor snaps, but it's wholly unconvincing, based on how breathy he sounds. He takes longer than Lucifer expects to recover- damn, Alastor really needs to work on his endurance, huh?- and he lets out one last exhale, before speaking.

"Your dance moves are passable enough. Despite all your missteps."

"Uh, I didn't make a single mistake, you ass."

"You made several. But I suppose you are simply not skilled enough to notice."

"Bull,"

Lucifer shoves him,

"shit,"

shoves-

"Mind your language, your majesty." Alastor swipes at him, claw scratching his cheek-

"Oh, you fucker!"

Lucifer runs right into him, and that's when they viciously tussle each other onto the floor, smack-hit-punch, exchanging blows with wild recklessness.

(Even so, Lucifer feels light as air, like all his worries have dissipated.)

Beyond the balcony doors,

where the party is underway,

Tom Trench slowly pulls the curtains shut. He had opened it just a sliver to record whatever Alastor and Lucifer were doing, although…

Why did he just witness a fight between the engaged couple? It looked like they were seriously about to kill each other.

Not that it's any of his concern. He texts the video to Katie, before tip-toeing away as discreetly as possible.

Time: *8:00 pm*
Event: *Public Indecency*

"Ain't that Lucifer and Alastor?" Angel Dust points at the balcony, and Husk's eyes follow in that direction. "Those morons are fightin' even on a day like this. They're gonna ruin the whole plan at this rate."

"I don't think we were gonna pull it off, anyway." Husk fixes him with a look. "You know I ain't much of an actor."

“Your role is to be the bartender, Husk! That’s literally your day job!”

“It’s different when there’s lines to memorize and shit!”

“Whatever. Just follow my lead.”

“I always do.”

Angel Dust pauses walking; they’re patrolling in the garden to catch any stragglers from the party, although it’s quite secluded at the moment. “Speakin’ of following my lead…”

He leans down to kiss Husk, and in an instant, he wraps his arm around Angel Dust’s waist, pulling him in closer. His hands roam over Husk’s back- his shoulders- his head, and Angel Dust has never been more grateful for having six arms in his life.

“Wanna fuck here?” Angel Dust murmurs.

“Please don’t.” Niffty says, appearing out of nowhere, and they yelp at her presence.

“What- NIFF! The hell you doin’ here?” Husk asks.

“Charlie said to come back. We’re going to start the ceremony soon!”

The ceremony? So that means…

Angel Dust and Husk exchange glances, before he looks back at Niffty. “Finally. Took them long enough. C’mon, let’s get a move on.”

As Angel Dust is about to leave, a rustling noise catches his attention. It definitely isn’t coming from them, so he turns around to check their surroundings- but he doesn’t notice anything amiss.

“Angel. You comin’?” Husk asks. Angel Dust scans the perimeters one last time, before shrugging.

“Yeah. Wait up!”

Once the group from the Hazbin Hotel has left, the cameraman pokes his head out from the bushes.

Phew, he thinks, relieved. *At least they didn't find me.*

He checks the footage on his phone; it's a pretty clear shot of all of them, discussing about a mysterious 'plan'. That should be enough ammo, right?

"I really don't get paid enough for this." He mutters, before texting the video file to Katie.

Time: *9:00 pm*
Event: *Shady Princess Activities*

Katie skulks around the corner of the hallway, with yet another flute of champagne in her hands. The world is starting to get just a little bit off-centred; maybe she had too much, but whatever. Good alcohol is still good alcohol.

Besides, she's still lucid enough to follow after the princess and her girlfriend. They're currently standing by Charlie's office, and Katie positions her phone so that they're both in the frame, recording their conversation covertly.

As Charlie closes the door, her girlfriend anxiously paces across the hallway,

step-step-step-step-step-step-step-step-step-

"Um, Vaggie?" Charlie looks at her. "Your nervousness is making me nervous."

"I-" She stops walking, and lets out a sigh. "Sorry. Did you hide it?"

"Yeah! I even locked it in my desk. Now no one will ever find it." Charlie grins. "I'll deal with this after they exchange vows. This ceremony has to be PERFECT, Vaggie."

Find it? And dealing with what? Katie thinks, feeling increasingly suspicious. *What is that stupid princess up to?*

Vaggie smiles in relief. "Well, good. Lock up your office so that we can get the ceremony going."

“Yep!”

Charlie lifts up her key, but before she can push it in, a loud

“AHHHHH!”

emits from the distance. They all swivel their heads to the direction of the sound, including Katie, and Vaggie grabs Charlie’s arm worriedly. “Was that Niffty?”

“I think so! Oh, gosh. What could she be up to *this* time?”

“Knowing her, it’s got to be something bad.” Vaggie tugs at her urgently. “Let’s stop her before she stabs a guest, or something.”

“O-okay!”

They break off into a run, and in their haste to leave, they leave the office door ajar. Typical- that Charlie girl is so trustful, it probably never even crossed her mind that someone would break into her office.

After making sure no one else is around, Katie slips in, and makes a beeline to the mahogany desk. Charlie had locked *something* in the drawer, something that she didn’t want anyone else to find. If that’s the case…

Katie picks up some loose paperclips from Charlie’s desk, and bends them to the perfect shape. That should be decent enough as a makeshift lock pick. She inserts the ends of the paperclips into the keyhole, shifting it around until she hears a

click!

The drawer slides

open,

and that’s when she sees it.

Jackpot.

“Niffty? Are you okay?”

“Charlie!” Niffty wails. “Look at my dress! It’s dirty! I can’t do my flower girl duties like this!”

There’s the slightest speck of dirt on her apron, and Charlie pats it clean with a handkerchief. “There you go, Niffty. You should be all good now.”

“Is that why you screamed?” Vaggie asks. “I thought something bad happened.”

“This *was* bad.”

“We have very different definitions of ‘bad’, Niffty. Look, we were right in the middle of something, and your screaming really distracted-”

“It’s fine!” Charlie stands up, and pats herself down. “We should get started, anyway.”

“O-kay!”

Vaggie sighs, but relents immediately. “Of course, babe. Whatever you need.”

Charlie grips onto her microphone, trying to psych herself up. All the pieces are coming into place; all they have to do is stick the landing.

No big deal!

“Hi, everyone! It’s almost time for you know whaaaaaat! Please come on down and grab a seat. Our ceremony will start in a few minutes!”

Charlie’s voice booms over the intercom, and the guests begin shuffling over to the parlour. Katie places her champagne down, turning to address her camera crew.

“Get the projectors ready for me, ASAP. And make sure your cameras are pointed at Charlie. I want to see her crying face on every screen in town!”

“Katie,” Tom says delicately, “are you sure this is going to work? You’ve had quite a bit to drink-”

“For once in your life, just *shut up,* Tom.”

“Okay, fine.”

“That’s not shutting up.”

Time: *10:00 pm*
Event: *Wedding Ceremony Begins*

Once everyone is gathered for the ceremony…

… Charlie motions for the philharmonic orchestra to begin.

Flower petals gently drift downwards from the ceiling…

… And the doors slowly open, revealing Alastor and Lucifer, standing side-by-side.

Crraaaaaaaaaap.

Lucifer's walking down the aisle with Alastor, and he has no idea what to do with his arms. Does he loop it around Alastor's elbow? Does he just swing them as he walks? And wait, *how* do people walk again?

"You could look a little happier, your majesty." Alastor says under his breath, so that no one else can hear. "Remember: you are never fully dressed without a smile!"

Lucifer attempts to smile, which makes Alastor immediately recoil. “Never mind. You ought to stick with scowling.”

“I wasn’t scowling.” Lucifer touches his face worriedly. “Was I?”

“You were doing something quite odd with your expression. It was rather unbecoming.”

“Wow. You really gonna say that to me on my wedding day?”

“It is my wedding day, as well. And honesty is the best policy!”

“Hi!” Charlie whispers. Unbeknownst to either of them, they had somehow already made it to the altar. “You two have been muttering the whole time. Everyone’s looking at you kind of funny.”

“Sorry.” Lucifer whispers back. He stands up straighter, and pointedly turns to face Alastor. After a moment, he offers his hands out, palm-up, and Alastor gingerly accepts.

“YEAH! Hand-holding!” Angel Dust lets out a loud wolf whistle, and the audience titters at this. “Better use some protection, am I right?”

“Angel, no heckling, please.” Charlie sends him a disapproving look, which automatically silences him. “Okay! Before we begin, can we all settle down?”

It takes a while, but the crowd does slowly quiesce. Charlie pulls out her script from her pocket, and the only sound is of her unfolding the paper, crinkling as she smooths it out.

She clears her throat, before raising the microphone to her lips.

“Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to celebrate the union of my dad, Lucifer, and Alastor, in marriage.”

The orchestra swells up prettily, and the sound of the violin and piano mingle together in perfect harmony. It causes a single tear to drip down Charlie’s cheek, which sparkles under the light. “Sorry- I just… I’m very excited for this. Okay. Marriage is… based on… love and- respect- one second.”

She dabs at her eye with the edge of her sleeve, sniffling a little. “To witness the joining of these two beautiful, wonderful souls is so… it’s just… I’m gonna- I’m gonna fast forward this before I start bawling.”

Is she really crying at their fake marriage? There’s a warm, fuzzy feeling, right in Lucifer’s chest, and he lets go of Alastor’s hand to squeeze her arm.

“You okay?”

“Perfect, dad.” Charlie sends him a watery smile. “I… well, I couldn’t be at your first wedding. Because, duh, I wasn’t born yet. So to be here, for your second… I’m just over the moon, you know?”

Oh, Charlie.

Dammit all, he kind of wants to cry as well, but he holds back, merely smiling back at her reassuringly. He's her dad, so he needs to act as her support system.

Once Charlie regains her composure, she continues on with officiating.

"Okay! Enough of all that. So, I have the rings here." She pulls out two red boxes from her pockets. "Let's start the exchanging of the vows, and then we can go off to dance the night away."

Just then:

All the lights suddenly turn off.

And then:

A single spotlight shines down on the crowd.

Right then:

Katie stands up, her eyes glowing maliciously under the light.

"What a touching performance, your highness. You should really be an actress."

"I- what?" Charlie hurriedly wipes the remaining tears off from her cheek. "What are you doing, Katie?"

"Oh, just my civic duty." Katie's smirk widens. "Allow me to expose this wedding for what it truly is. Which is a complete and utter sham!"

"A sham?"

"What does that mean-"

"So this isn't a real wedding?"

Katie's declaration is met with confused murmurs, which she fully expected. She just needs to guide the story perfectly, and all will go exactly as she planned.

With a snap of her fingers, multiple giant projections start playing on the walls, featuring clips that they've taken from the past few hours:

1. Lucifer and Alastor (distorted onscreen) fighting
2. Angel Dust and Husk in the garden
3. Charlie and Vaggie in front of her office

She swivels to face the broadcast cameras, which is recording everything for live TV. "We're ON at the Hazbin Hotel! Tonight, 666 News presents the fakest wedding in all of Hell. You may have thought it was just an honest celebration for this devilish pair, but I'm here to prove otherwise."

"Hey! Hi!" Charlie runs down in a panic, trying to reach Katie- but her camera crew acts as a physical barrier, preventing her from approaching. "Katie, this is all just a silly misunderstanding, um… do you wanna talk in private, maybe?"

"Nope!" Katie barrels onwards, ignoring her. "Now, my first clue that something may be wrong was the invitations. Why would they send out invites so last-minute? They didn't even provide options for food, or say if we can bring a plus one. Everything pointed to it being a rush job."

"Right, that's true-"

"Yeah, why was it so sudden-"

A chorus of agreement ripples through the crowd, reverberating towards all directions. Satisfied, Katie continues.

"And why would you invite every single person in Hell? Do you even know these nobodies?" Katie grabs a guest at random, and shoves him in front of Charlie's face. "How about this guy?"

"Er…" Charlie gulps. She clearly doesn't know his name, and Katie feels even more vindicated. Everything's unfolding exactly the way that she had hoped, and she can practically feel the views for the channel go up, up, up.

"Now, isn't that suspicious?" Katie crows. "But I have more! Tom, turn the audio on for the projections."

He does, and all the things that the Hazbin Hotel has been saying echoes throughout the room:

"They're gonna ruin the whole plan at this rate."

"I don't think we were gonna pull it off, anyway. You know I ain't much of an actor."

"Did you hide it?"

"Yeah! I even locked it in my desk. Now no one will ever find it. I'll deal with this after they exchange vows. This ceremony has to be PERFECT, Vaggie."

It ends with the video of Alastor and Lucifer throttling each other on the balcony, just seconds away from killing each other.

"Besides, what sort of couple beats each other up before their wedding? And don't even say that it's fake. Just look at Lucifer! There's a cut on his cheek!" Everyone turns to look at him, and he freezes up at the attention. "It's a perfect match with the one in the video."

Lucifer quickly wipes the blood away from his face when she points it out, but the damage is done. Katie's successfully sown doubt in everyone's minds- she can see it in the way they look around, the way they move, the way their facial expressions all look confused…

Now all she has to do is bring it home.

"Don't believe me? Look at this! It's straight from the desk of our very own princess!" Katie yanks it out from her jacket, and the camera zooms in, live-streaming it for all to see:

A marriage certificate.

To be more precise, it's a *forged* marriage certificate. It may look accurate from afar, but up-close, it lacks an official seal, rendering it null.

"This is a fake marriage certificate, made by Charlie herself. She even locked it up so that no one can find it. Which *means* that this marriage isn't actually happening. She just needed this document in case anyone asks to see it. Looks convincing enough, doesn't it?"

"But why?" Someone calls out. "Why would they throw a fake wedding?"

"Excellent question."

Katie pauses,

(for dramatic effect),

before pointing an accusatory finger at Charlie. "To lure everyone in here, of course! And now that we're all trapped in their hotel, they can do whatever they want to us. They can torture us- maim us- that Vaggie has an angelic weapon, which means they can even *kill us."*

Gasps roll through the horde, and Katie turns to look at them. "So what are you waiting for? Will you just wait for your deaths, like sitting ducks? Or will you stand up, and fight against the Hotel?"

Katie feels absolutely giddy, like she's full of adrenaline. Or it could just be due to the alcohol that's coursing through her body. Regardless, she feels amazing, on top of the world, and honestly, who gives a shit if people attack the hotel or not?

The whole point was to stir up unrest, and she did it. She succeeded!

Even better, what if the entirety of Hell really did turn against their own monarch? Not only would that be incredibly fun to see, they could also have the most amazing news coverage for months/years/decades. Katie can practically see all the money that will pour in through her door, how much fame and fortune she can accrue by dancing on their graves.

And she'll do whatever it takes to get what she wants.

Alastor puts his hand over his face, his body shaking, just a little.

Lucifer turns away, his arms wrapped around himself protectively.

And then, the two of them throw their heads back, cackling so hard that tears start to stream down their faces.

“Oh- oh god!” Lucifer gasps, trying to catch his breath. “I can’t take it anymore!”

“HAH! HA-HA!” Alastor wipes a tear away from his eye. “What a tall tale you are spinning. How could this possibly be a plot to kill every single sinner in Hell? If that’s the case, Charlie would have simply permitted the exterminations to continue.”

The guests seem a little more appeased by this, whereas Katie looks increasingly taken-aback. She flounders for a second, before brightening up. “That doesn’t matter. This is still not a real wedding, because you’re not actually getting married! I know that for a fact.”

“W-e-l-l…” Charlie trails off. “Sort of. But also sort of not. Because- dad. Do you wanna explain?”

“Sure, of course.”

She hands the rings to Alastor and Lucifer, who both slip it onto their fourth fingers, and the cameras hone in on their hands. Lucifer wiggles his fingers on purpose, making the metal glint under the light.

“Yeah, we’re already married.”

His statement is met with shocked noises from the audience, gasps abound, with Katie looking utterly gobsmacked.

“WHAT?!”

“Indeed.” Alastor says. “We sealed the deal a few days ago-”

“Not a deal,” Lucifer interrupts,

“-very well, we *tied the knot.* Does that appease you?”

“Yeah, that’s better.”

Katie takes in a deep breath to compose herself, before gritting out, “Are you fucking serious? Why are you even hosting this goddamn wedding then? And why did you invite so many people?”

“We did intend on getting married today, but I decided that I’d rather not wait any longer. Best not to let anyone else snatch up my king, hmm?”

“And I wanted everyone in Hell to know that he’s with me, now.” Lucifer elbows him, and Alastor rolls his eyes, although the action is tinged with affection.

“You two are so full of shit! Is *that* the action of someone who’s in love?” Katie violently gestures towards the projections, which still features them on the balcony, embroiled in a fight.

“If you knew anything about us- which you definitely don’t- we like a good tussle.” Lucifer says. “So that’s pre-tty normal behaviour for us.”

Amongst the crowd, Angel Dust hollers: “It’s true! They’re both freaks!”

There’s an appreciative chuckle from the horde, but Katie’s face is looking paler by the second, like she’s on the verge of throwing up. “Explain the marriage certificate, then. The fake one! What the hell was all that?!”

“Oh, um. That’s on me.” Charlie lifts her hand up sheepishly. “It’s my prototype design.”

“Your *what?”*

“The thing is, I wanted to make them a custom marriage certificate. Only the best for my two dads, you know? I was going to give them the draft as a wedding gift. Although…” She lifts an eyebrow. “I had locked it in my drawer for safekeeping. So I guess you broke into my desk.”

Katie withers at this, crumpling up the paper in her hands. “Oh, fuck you, honey. That’s such a lie. If that’s the case, where is the real marriage certificate?”

“Right here!”

Charlie materializes it out of thin air; the certificate has a drawing of a duck on one side, and a deer on the other. Just like the plaque from the music room, and the designs on the stained glass windows.

(She really did take their preferences into consideration.)

“There! See? Dated and signed, by me. Since I’m royalty, I have the power to validate their marriage. And if you’re still doubting about how legitimate it is, just look at who the witness is!”

She presents the certificate proudly, showcasing the golden seal that’s stamped on top. There’s an elegant signature, written in cursive holographic ink:

Name of Witness:
Sera.

“Check it out! It’s signed by a seraphim from Heaven!” Charlie says victoriously. “Which means that this is a genuine marriage certificate.”

Katie opens her mouth.

Closes it.

Opens it again.

And closes it, dumbfounded.

Before shoving people out of her way, left and right, trying to run out as fast as possible- clearly attempting to escape-

“NOPE!” Lucifer flies over in record speed, intercepting her at the door. “There is no way you’re leaving. Nuh-uh.”

Katie slowly retreats, attempting to laugh it off, but it’s utterly unconvincing. “Your majesty! I think I left my car engine running, so I have to go now-”

“Katie, stop.”

Although Charlie speaks quietly, her voice pierces through the air, sounding uncharacteristically stern.

“You recorded these videos without our permission,” she waves at the projections, “broke in to steal my personal stuff,” gestures to the crushed paper, “and you made up a rumour that we were doing all this to *kill people?”*

All the TV cameras are pointed directly at Charlie, like they can’t look away. “You’ve been spreading lies about the Hazbin Hotel for the past few months. And today, everyone can finally see you for what you are.”

Charlie walks towards her until they’re face-to-face, and she taps her finger on Katie’s nose condescendingly.

“You’re a terrible journalist, who is *really* bad at her job.”

Katie bristles up at this. “Oh, I’ll show you how terrible I can actually be-”

“Vox.” Alastor interjects, and Vox lifts his head up, looking rather startled at being addressed. “Doesn’t VoxTek control the news channel? Is this how you run your staff? Seems to me like you need to train your employees better.”

All eyes are on Vox now, and he lets out an audible groan. “Alastor, you fucker. Are you seriously dragging me into this?”

“Why, you were involved the moment you stepped foot on these premises.”

“Ugh.” Vox places his hands over his face, before pulling it down in defeat. “Fine, twist my arm. Katie, Tom, you’re both fired.”

“WHAT?!” She yells. “You can’t- after all these years-”

“Yes, I fucking can.” He scowls. “Clearly, you’re shit at your job. Why would I have a news reporter who doesn’t relay the actual news, right?”

“Oh, come on.” Katie tries for a smile. “You know I’ve been loyal to the Vees for this long. And my programming always brings in lots of viewers! You don’t actually want to fire me.”

“Everyone’s replaceable, Katie. You should know that by now.”

Her smile fades away.

And she bolts past Lucifer, fleeing through the door.

“Fuck!” Katie yells. “That stupid bitch ruined everything!”

She’s outside by the hotel’s gates, smoking a cigarette to calm herself down. This is the worst- and the champagne is sitting uncomfortably in her stomach- everything’s swirling, she wants to throw up-

“Katie!”

She lifts her head up, and she sees Tom, along with her camera crew. She hadn’t expected them to follow after her.

“Tom? What are you doing here?”

“Oh. Uh… they kicked us out.”

Of course. Katie rolls her eyes, and takes a deep inhale of her cigarette. “Great. I guess we’re all jobless now. I can’t believe that Charlie girl actually retaliated. I thought for sure she’d try to solve everything with ‘friendship,’ or some dumb shit like that. How could my plan have failed?”

“I’d say that your arrogance was your downfall.” A voice calls out. They all lift up their heads-

-to see Alastor and Lucifer, perched right atop of the gate. They’re both in their full demon forms, and they glow red under the eerie evening light.

“Doesn’t matter.” Katie sneers. “Sure, you may have won *this* time, but someone else will attack your stupid hotel, spread lies, or make you doubt in yourself. And I’ll be right there to laugh when it happens.”

Lucifer breathes out fire, the flames hot and searing from this proximity. “Bring it on. Whatever happens, we’ll always be here to guard the hotel.”

“So why don’t you kindly fuck off?” Alastor says cheerfully. His tentacles shoot out to grab a few members of the camera crew, propelling them into the air, and Lucifer forces the ground to

CRACK!

open with his bare fist. As he lifts his head, eyes bright crimson with fury, Katie and Tom yelp, before turning tail as quickly as possible.

It’s done.

It’s finally, finally done.

(And they toast, and dance, and eat cake, and listen to music, and…)

Time: *11:00 pm*
Event: *Flower Toss*

Alastor bends down, and hands Niffty a bouquet of flowers. “Niffty, my dear, why don’t you do the honours?”

“YAY, OKAY!” She crawls on top of the podium, and lifts the flora above her head victoriously. “Who will get married next? Come here and face your doom!”

A bunch of people rush over, scrambling to be the recipient. With all her might, Niffty throws it over her shoulders-

-and Charlie catches it.

Time: *Midnight*
Event: *Wedding’s Done, So Get Out. Please.*

After the longest night of Lucifer’s life, the evening’s festivities have finally concluded. The guests have all departed, leaving only the Hazbin Hotel staff behind, thank *god.*

When they’re all huddled around a multi-tiered champagne tower (made by him, of course), Charlie raises a glass.

“A toast to us!” She says cheerfully. “Our new plan was absolutely perfect! Since Katie thought it was a fake wedding, we’ll do everything we can to make it look *super* fake. But it was actually a real marriage!”

Angel Dust clinks his glass against hers. “See? I told ya to keep the drinks flowin’, Charlie. She was so drunk, she didn’t even realize that we were planting things for her.”

“The open bar was perfect, Angel.” Husk says. “And I ain’t just sayin’ that because I get free booze. Although that part doesn’t hurt.”

“I just can’t believe how well it worked!” Charlie babbles. “I mean, I knew she’d be following after us the whole night, and that she’ll record us if we said a bunch of suspicious

things. She's been twisting our words around this whole time, so it makes sense that she'll continue doing it today."

"And locking up your desk only made it more enticing for her." Vaggie nods approvingly. "Good call on leaving some paper clips for her to use, babe."

Vaggie gives her a big smooch, and Charlie giggles at this. "Aw, thanks, Vaggie!"

"Well, *my* favourite part is that Katie tried to reveal everything at the most dramatic moment. During the exchanging of vows. That's showbiz for ya." Angel Dust chugs his champagne, before grabbing five more with his other hands. He's about to drink them all when Vaggie snatches one away.

"Easy there, Angel. You know we have to clean up, right?"

"Are you fucking kiddin' me? Leave it to that mopey Lute girl. It's almost the weekend, anyway. She's supposed to come down for trash duty, right?"

"Look, I hate Lute, but are you really going to have her clean an event she didn't even attend?"

"It's her punishment, ain't it?"

As Angel Dust and Vaggie continue squabbling, Charlie turns to look at Lucifer. "And a special thank you to the best actors in the whole world! To my dad, and Dad the Second!"

"I told you not to call me that, my dear."

She ignores Alastor, seeming far too giddy to be deterred. "I can't believe you got Sera on board. Was she upset when you called her at the Heaven Embassy?"

"Er… not really. Good thing she didn't ask too many questions."

Still, Lucifer winces at the memory. He had literally presented her with a wedding certificate, asking her to sign it while also providing zero context. She was extremely baffled (which was, admittedly, kind of funny), but she *did* ask him to come up for tea to explain it.

"You two were seriously so amazing. Thank you dad, other dad." Charlie pauses, her smile suddenly rueful. "Well… I guess that's the last time I can call you that."

Charlie materializes the wedding certificate, and with a flick of her wrist, she burns it up. The certificate transforms into a small pile of ashes on the floor, and Lucifer feels strangely…

sad…

…at the sight.

(Which is stupid. That's stupid. It wasn't real- none of it was.)

“Okay! As we had promised, TA-DA! I now pronounce you NOT husband and husband. See? No harm done! You only had to be married for a few days to make it a real union. This way, if someone tried to look you two up in the registry, your names will be there.”

Angel Dust lifts his head up. “That has to be the shortest marriage in the world. It’s gotta be a world record or somethin’. You two should at least do a honeymoon.”

“A honeymoon?” Alastor echoes.

“Yeah. Like a romantic getaway, or whatever.”

He glances over at Lucifer, his smile growing. “Why, certainly. I have already made plans for us.”

He did? Lucifer tilts his head, a little confused, but Angel Dust beats him to the questioning.

“Seriously? The hell are you two even goin’ to do?”

“Let’s just say that I plan on spending our honeymoon with Lucifer underneath me.” Alastor’s eyes twinkle mischievously. “Or him on top. Whatever works.”

“So you’re gonna go fight.” Angel Dust says dismissively, looking uninterested.

“Incorrect.”

Angel Dust doesn’t seem to fully comprehend at first.

And then his jaw drops.

“WAIT! HOLD THE FUCK UP! ARE YOU TWO ACTUALLY-”

“Make a portal, sir.” Alastor orders, cutting Angel Dust off. He certainly doesn’t have to ask twice, because Lucifer’s already conjured one up, yanking Alastor through with lightning speed.

They land within Lucifer’s jazz club - the one beside his mansion.

Alastor looks around the venue, feeling a little nostalgic at the sight. It had been the background for Lucifer's confession, and he remembers it like it was yesterday: Lucifer, reading off of some pages he prepared beforehand, his hands shaking as he spoke.

Alastor runs a hand along the stage before sitting down, and Lucifer takes a seat beside him. They're both perched on the edge of the platform, but Lucifer's legs are far too short to reach the floor, and so they dangle in the air.

They sit in silence for a moment, before Alastor turns to look at him.

"Did you bring me here to bed me?"

"No!" Lucifer flushes a little, cheeks pink. "Not that I'd be opposed. I, uh… I just wanted to be with you. Alone. That's all."

It's innocent. Remarkably so.

And Alastor can't fault him for wanting that, because he wants that too, wanted that all night, actually, away from all the masses, the people, the commotion…

"So you picked the location where you confessed to me." He settles on saying.

"Yeah. It's the most private, y'know? No one else knows about it."

Alastor twists around to look at the centre of the stage, recalling the way Lucifer had played his violin, the melody beautiful and striking. Lucifer follows his gaze, and they stare at the spot together.

"You had performed a song for me, at the time." Alastor glances over at him. "Did you ever name it?"

"You know I'm not great with names."

"Is that a no?"

Lucifer takes his crown off, and places it beside him. His veil tumbles over the edge, the tulle resembling a cascading waterfall. "Sort of. Best I could come up with is, 'FOR AL,' so…"

"Such a romantic," Alastor teases, but it doesn't matter what he names it, truthfully. It's rare for him to receive a gift, be it in life or death. Just the fact that Lucifer even composed something for him was astonishing enough.

For some odd reason, Lucifer is staring at him.

(Wordlessly.)

Alastor tries to puzzle out his expression, but Lucifer's countenance is so carefully blank, he can't get a read on him at all.

“What is it?” He finally asks. Lucifer averts his gaze, before tugging the red ring off his fourth finger. Once it’s fully removed, he offers it to Alastor, and his voice is incredibly quiet when he says:

“You can have your ring back. Since the wedding’s over now.”

That’s… not what he expected to hear at all.

Alastor picks up the ring, appraising it carefully. It’s just a small trinket, a symbol of something that is neither here nor there. He could take it back. Burn it into nothing, just like their marriage certificate.

But I don’t want to do that.

Alastor grabs onto Lucifer’s left hand, and slips it back onto his fourth finger. He purposefully avoids Lucifer’s bewildered gaze, feeling too embarrassed to look back at him.

“You may keep it.” Alastor eventually says.

“But-”

“Keep it.”

Lucifer shuts his mouth after that. Keeps the ring on, as well. Alastor feels his heart tap-dancing in his ribcage, and it reminds him of how they were dancing on the balcony the first time- the second time. Every time they danced.

He’s feeling sentimental. Such drivel. It’s making his palms sweat, his deer ears flatten; he almost wants to drop his smile, but doesn’t- hasn’t gotten to that point yet- he finally makes eye contact with Lucifer,

and his eyes are so warm, so full of affection, that Alastor wants to hide, hide, hide…

“We never did say our wedding vows.” He says, and his voice sounds so small. What is it about Lucifer that makes him so incredibly inelegant?

“We’re…” Lucifer swallows. “I mean, it wasn’t- we’re not actually getting married.”

“Does it matter?”

They stare at each other, and the atmosphere between them is thick. Charged. A storm cloud, heavy and swirling, the static palpable in the air.

“Married, or not married. I couldn’t care less. I don’t need a piece of paper to prove what we have.”

Alastor raises his left hand, where the ring glimmers under the light. “And truthfully, I don’t even need this. Although it is quite a nice piece of jewelry.”

“Should have known you’d be a *bit* superficial.” Lucifer lets out a chuckle, but he adjusts his position so that he’s facing towards Alastor, intertwining their fingers together.

Left hand with left hand.

Ring clinking against ring.

“You wanna say your vows first?” Lucifer asks, voice hushed.

“I suppose since it is my suggestion, that seems reasonable.” Alastor hesitates. “It will be rather short. I don’t have much to say.”

“So you didn’t have a million paragraphs prepared about your undying love for me? Gotta say, I’m a little hurt.”

“Lucifer.”

“Sorry, sorry. Continue.”

Alastor squeezes Lucifer’s hand a little tighter. It’s strange- a few months prior, he would rather rip out his own entrails than admit how he’s feeling. But now, the words slip out easily, swirling around them like ink in water.

“I… have never felt this need for anyone, until you, Lucifer. And if I could carve you out and live inside of you, I would. But I’d prefer if you were alive. Unfortunately.”

“Right. Unfortunately.” Lucifer gives him a wry grin, indicating that there’s no hard feelings. Alastor looks down at their interwoven fingers, and he’s…

Perfectly composed. He feels at peace; no trembling, no worries, no fears, no headaches.

(So he lays it all on the line.)

“It’s always been you, Lucifer. I was travelling aimlessly in this hellish plane, wondering about all the choices I’ve made, but my paths, they- they lead to you. *Has* to be you. Now, and evermore.”

He’s finished, nothing left to say, mind perfectly calm, and Lucifer…

his eyes look a little wet.

And when he speaks, his voice is rather shaky, like he’s holding back his emotions, so it’s not surprising when he cracks a joke:

“That’s not really a vow.”

Alastor squints at him, and he almost crushes Lucifer’s hand under his grip. “Ow- HEY! Okay, okay! That’s… that’s a vow! A good vow!”

“That’s what I thought.” Alastor says, feeling satisfied. “Now, what are yours?”

If only Lucifer prepared something to say beforehand. Like when he confessed to Alastor, with the speech he had tucked away inside his vest.

Now he's left scrambling to come up with the right words, and his brain is fizzing out a little. He's not a poet, or anything. Not like Alastor, who can come up with beautiful sentences on the fly, which both irks him and melts his heart.

He'll just have to say whatever half-lucid thought forms in his mind.

"Alastor."

"Yes?"

He swipes his thumb over Alastor's ring, and the metal is smooth to the touch. "You… well… you're kind of life-changing, you know that? Although I really shouldn't say that, because it'll inflate your huge ego even further."

"Oh, I'm sure you'll say something rude that will counter-balance that."

"Maybe." The corners of Lucifer's lips quirk up. "It's just- it's all-"

It's *unbelievable,* is what it is. Because his life had been so hard- so full of ups and downs- and none of it felt fair, just a punishment bestowed upon him from above. He had cursed, cried, screamed; certain that he'll never feel happiness again.

And yet…

Lucifer looks up, sees the curvature of Alastor's smile, sincere and open. The way his vermillion eyes crinkle up at the edges, gazing at Lucifer in a way that's only reserved for him.

"Every day of my life felt the same." He finally says. "Bland. Colourless. I wanted to be alone, but I hated the loneliness. I couldn't even reach out to my own daughter- to anyone, really. It was so exhausting. Like my whole world was on mute."

Lucifer's grin widens. "Then you showed up, and you changed everything. I've never met someone who was so nasty, so argumentative. The biggest piece of shit on the planet."

“This may be our worst compliment exchange yet.” He says dryly, and Lucifer places a finger on his lips, silencing him.

“But you’re mesmerizing, Alastor. I couldn’t take my eyes off of you.”

Alastor’s like light through crystal. A kaleidoscope of colour. Ridiculous, isn’t it, to find love, even all the way down in Hell?

So all that’s left to say is,

“I love you.”

“I love you too.” Alastor replies. An instantaneous response. They keep their left hands together, neither of them wanting to move. “Although, I wouldn’t consider that a vow.”

“It’s as much of a vow as yours was.”

“Oh, I don’t think so.”

What’s in a vow, really? It’s just a solemn oath to one another, isn’t it?

A sort of…

promise…

Lucifer lifts up his right hand, and extends his little finger.

“Do you pinky promise?” He says, half-teasing, half-serious. “To have and to hold, in sickness and in health?”

Alastor’s eyes widen-

and then he laughs, a real one, loud and raucous as usual. It echoes all around them,

HA-HA-HA!

Eventually, he calms down and wraps his little finger around Lucifer’s, shaking their hands up and down

one-

two-

three times.

“Very well, then. I promise.”

“So it’s a deal.” Lucifer says.

“Not a deal.” Alastor responds.

They've flipped who says it, and he's torn between laughing or crying, because Alastor's really changed, hasn't he?

But so have I, Lucifer thinks. *So have I.*

In one fluid motion, Alastor kisses him- sealing the deal, sealing their vows, slow and soft and perfect, and it's the best kiss they've had so far; yet it's also a tie with their other kisses, because how could Lucifer possibly rank perfection, anyway?

They break their kiss.

Forehead, pressed against forehead.

And because Alastor can't say anything nice, he leans in to say,

"See you in Hell, darling. Forever!"

And so they lived happily ever after.

THE END.

Chapter End Notes

This time, I want YOU to tell me all my references! I made a lot of references to the show, as well as callbacks to previous chapters. Can you spot them all?

Fun Facts about OSAS:
- This story was originally going to end at ch. 8. I was going to end it at the favour -

which was always going to be a hug. They still hugged at Ch. 11 (The Favour).
- Afterwards, I thought about ending it at ch. 12. But it didn't make any sense to me, because thinking about Alastor as a person, he just wouldn't fall in love so quickly, and not in that way.
- I wasn't going to post this story at all, I was actually terrified to write this! Like, absolutely scared. I just made this account on a whim, right after Hazbin ended, and ever since then it's snowballed into the most wonderful experience. Literally had 0 subscribers/followers, so thank you for giving me a chance.
- I'm so glad I did, because this has been an absolutely INCREDIBLE, life-changing year! I met so many great friends and talented people along the way. I've done things I've never done before, and I regret none of my choices.

My favourite comments are the ones where people say they laughed or felt happy after reading my fic. I'm so glad this story of mine can cheer you up! I like having a good time, and I wanted to write a very unserious romantic comedy for these two old men.

Feel free to bind this into a book (for your PERSONAL LIBRARY ONLY). If you've made it this far, you deserve a badge, or a medal, or something. Writing this was truly a labour of love. From the bottom of my heart, I have endless gratitude for all of you, and I love you so much.

Works inspired by this one

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!